

Digital Review of Asia Pacific Feedback and Assessment

Randy Spence June 23, 2009

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Competition	6
3.	Indicators of Usage	23
	a. Book Sales	23
	b. IDRC Website Visits.....	23
	c. Academic Citations	24
	d. Internet References	24
	e. Links to Website	25
4.	Feedback from Interviews.....	27
	a. Position / Competition	27
	b. , State of Practice	28
	c. Policy Influence	31
	d. Structure / Format / Content	33
	e. e-Publication and Online Presence	37
	f. Capacity and Network Development	40
	g. Organizing Structures and Sustainability.....	42
	h. Marketing and Reach	44
5.	Analysis and Options	46
	Discussion	52
	Planning Meeting in Penang	52
Annex 2	DiRAP on the Internet.....	68
Annex 3	DiRAP 2003-2006; Leila Green, Edith Cowan.....	80

1. Introduction

The terms of reference for assessing DiRAP are as follows:

- a) examine the position of the DirAP publication in the market place (which is inside and outside Asia), vis-a-vis similar publications, in comparison with other initiatives in the ICT&D field;
- b) evaluate the specificity and significance of DirAP as a publication about state-of-practice, emerging trends and issues pertaining to ICT&D in the region and explore its potential;
- c) investigate how DirAP is perceived and used by its targeted market segments
 - ICT&D policy and decision-makers
 - ICT&D practitioners and experts
 - Researchers and educators
 - NGOs, Government, Academia, Private sector

placing emphasis on discovering what content in DirAP has potential in driving significant ICT public policy, and taking the opportunity to learn how to reach potential users in the region, responsible for ICT&D public policy, and keeping in view the policies of the private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations for social objectives, human development and innovation etc.;

- d) investigate the value of the current structure/format/content of DirAP with each of these market segments, and obtain suggestions for future DirAP production and publication. Obtain views and specific suggestions on the possible move towards remaking DirAP into an e-publication, as well. In particular, investigate whether it is desirable and feasible to turn DirAP into a WIKI-type production.
- e) assess the contribution of DirAP in developing ICT&D partners' local capacity in researching, collecting, analyzing, forecasting and writing about ICT&D issues;
- f) examine the organizing structures for the production of DirAP:
 - Board members, editor, associate editor, their remuneration;
 - Authoring partnerships and remuneration
 - Board meetings and author meetings

With a view to evaluating sustainable mechanisms for the publication;

- g) assess the publishing / marketing strategies of DirAP (sales, visibility, etc.).

The assessment has been done mainly in April and May, 2009. The main elements were to:

- contact and interview as many people as possible who have been involved in DiRAP or are in its target market segments - c) above;
- examine similar publications and initiatives found through Internet research and through the interviews;

- obtain usage indicators - sales, Internet usage of the Review, citations, Internet references to the Review;
- organize findings and feedback, and undertake an analysis of findings, implications and options.

Following are the people contacted and interviewed. In most cases, this was by Skype or phone, with conversations of ½ - 1 ½ hours. In some cases, respondents sent substantial sets of comments. (Names in italics below are planned for interviews, but not yet done).

DiRAP Editorial Board and related (13)

Patricia Arinto	Claude-Yves Charron
Suchit Nanda	Maria Ng
Rajesh Sreenivasan	Krishnamurthy Sriramesh
Jian Yan Wang	Shahid Akhtar
Laurent Elder	Danny Butt
Chin Saik Yoon	Felix Librero
<i>Milagros Rivera</i>	

DiRAP Authors (8)

L. Ariunaa (Mongolia)	Tengku Mohd Azzman Shariffadeen
John Baggaley	Lelia Green
Tian Belawati	<i>Yuli Liu</i>
<i>John Fung</i>	<i>Nalaka Gunawardena</i>

Outside DiRAP (14)

Bill Melody	LIRNE.NET
Hernan Galperin	DIRSI
Alison Gilwald	RIA
Richard Heeks	U. Manchester
Rohan Samarajiva	LIRNEasia
Chanuka Wattegama	LIRNEasia
Tim Kelly	infoDev
George Sciadas	Statistics Canada
John Ure	U. Hong Kong
Robin Mansell	LSE
Sam Paltridge	OECD
Rinalia Abdulrahim	GKP
Jan Servaes	U. Mass. Amherst
<i>Suboth Tripathee</i>	FIT Nepal

Total (35)

For the ‘outside DiRAP’ group, I contacted 4 more individuals – 3 private sector and 1 ADB – who could be expected to know of DiRAP but did not. Three suggested other names.

For the DiRAP author group, I had less response to requests for interviews; in addition to the 7 authors interviewed, 16 did not respond. Those who responded provided valuable information, and also represent many ‘market segment’ groups, given the diversity of DiRAP authors, but it

would be good to get more feedback from the DiRAP network, and some is being planned (a focus group) during the PAN All Partners Meeting in Penang, June 12-14.

After some discussion with the Editorial Board, I also sent a message to all current DiRAP authors through the 'Basecamp' website facility:

I have been asked by Orbicom, IDRC and DiRAP partners to do an assessment with the objective of exploring how DiRAP is seen and used by its targeted audiences - policy-makers and Governments, practitioners and experts, researchers and educators, academia, the private sector, NGOs and civil society – and options or possibilities for increasing its value and reach.

For those of you who I have contacted individually, please ignore this message. For others I haven't yet met,

I worked for IDRC from 1990-2005 as a program specialist and as Regional Director in Singapore (1990-2000). A CV is on line at <http://www.ophi.org.uk/subindex.php?id=people112>. By now, I have spoken with everyone on the Editorial Board, many authors and many users of DiRAP.

I would be very grateful for any thoughts you may have, however brief, on ways in which the DiRAP publication, production process and online/website activities might contribute further to:

- influencing ICT&D thinking, discussion and practice - in countries, regionally or globally
- influencing ICT&D public policy and regulation - directly or through policy making processes including research and knowledge/field building, stakeholder dialogue, media/journalism and public discussion, education, etc
- contributing to the capacities of researchers and research/policy institutions, particularly the author and editorial groups, but also people and organizations – public, private, academic / research, media, NGO and civic – involved in policy and practice in ICTs and development.

If you have time, please jot down one or two summary suggestions on these matters, or other / related ones, and email them back to me at wrsponce@gmail.com I will collate, and not attribute specifics to individuals without prior permission. (You are of course also free to post your thoughts and discuss these matters with everyone on Basecamp if you wish).

Many thanks, Randy

However, this realized only a few more brief responses, so it would appear that I have heard from most of the authors who wish to respond in this format or manner.

Finally, by way of introduction:

It is probably worth reading the evidence and feedback in Sections 2. – 4. below before the analysis in Section 5. Every analyst has a different perspective. Mine include, particularly, (welfare) economics and public finance, human development, innovation, ICT and poverty reduction. I also tend toward program development more than assessment, so the analysis may seem activist. Section 5. makes some suggestions or recommendations, but these are advanced only as options for the partners in DiRAP to consider.

IDRC has been the sole funder of DiRAP to date, and is currently in a program strategy process in which the ICT4D and IPS (Innovation, Policy and Science) program areas may be brought together, and the PAN program initiative may take a new form. This does not directly affect my terms of reference, but will likely be a factor in decisions before DiRAP, and came up in interesting ways in some interviews, so I've left these references in Section 4. and come back to this a little in Section 5.

The feedback from people outside the DiRAP family is based on the 2007-08 edition and earlier ones; some views would be different if based on the forthcoming 2009-10 edition.

The objectives of the current DiRAP project (2005-2009) are:

Overall objective

To generate new knowledge and literature about the ICT4D state-of-practice in the Asia-Pacific region and provide in-depth analyses and syntheses of ICT policy, technology development and application, issues and debates and the significance of ICT deployment for national and regional socio-development. DiRAP aims to disseminate to a global audience.

Specific objectives

To provide a one-stop reference source on the state-of-practice and future trends in ICT for development and ICT for industry in the Asia-Pacific region;

To serve as a comparative, analytical tool for ICT policy and decision-makers, practitioners and experts, researchers and educators;

To complement the statistical Digital Divide Index effort, concurrently undertaken by Orbicom, as a narrative monitoring tool for evaluating the infostates of Asia-Pacific countries;

To build and facilitate a core group of Asian researchers and writers to systematically review, analyse, forecast and report on ICT issues in the Asia-Pacific region on a regular basis;

To strengthen the capacity of key Southern ICT partners by developing their research skills in collecting, analyzing and synthesizing content;

To enable Northern and Southern researchers to cooperatively build a needed, shared data resource and to increase their interaction and sharing for research collaboration;

To test dual (free of charge distribution and for sale) marketing strategies of research content to developing and developed countries and segmented audiences within these differentiated markets;

To make DiRAP widely e-accessible, reflecting important communication trends in Asia-Pacific development.

May 27, 2009

Randy Spence

2. Competition

There are many kinds of publications and initiatives which serve similar purposes, and DiRAP has had a range of objectives including research reference, policy and practice influence, capacity development. To take an example more on the capacity than the publication side, CPRSouth operates in part as a small-grants program with the main reward for younger authors being the annual conference and its learning and networking opportunities. This can be seen as a competitor for DiRAP, and a different model, for supporting development of younger authors, particularly in weaker and less resourced country environments. The feedback and analysis sections below return to these various areas of competition – what follows in this section is a look at hopefully most regional and global reviews which offer useful comparators for DiRAP. Some might also be possible partners, a subject taken up in many interviews (Section 4.g).

More on the data and indicators side of DiRAP's several dimensions, competitors include

ITU Asia-Pacific Telecommunication/ICT Indicators 2008: Broadband in Asia-Pacific: too much, too little?

<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/asia/2008/index.html>

The screenshot shows the ITU website's 'Asia-Pacific Telecommunication/ICT Indicators 2008' page. The header includes the ITU logo and navigation links. The left sidebar lists 'ICT Statistics' with sub-links like 'Statistics', 'Publications and Database', and 'Events'. The main content area displays the publication title, '7th edition 2008', and links for 'Press release', 'Download the flyer (pdf format)', and 'Presentation at ITU Telecom Asia 2008'. A detailed description of the report is provided, followed by a 'Price : 69 CHF - ORDER NOW !' button.

While this particular publication is new, ITU data appears to be widely used. How good is the data, in terms of official sources etc, and what isn't included from a DiRAP perspective on needed/important ICT&D data? Both come up and are addressed in the interview feedback.

Asia Pacific Telecommunity Yearbook

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&ei=FY33SZrKIfKM5qU8L0P&sa=X&oi=spell&resnum=0&ct=result&cd=1&q=asia+pacific+telecommunity+yearbook&spell=1>



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APT PUBLICATIONS

The APT's publications are produced to meet the requirements of our Members and to provide a platform for the global and regional dissemination of information. The APT also aims at promoting better understanding of the Telecommunity and the regional needs.

The APT Yearbook

This prestigious publication was launched in 1994. The APT Yearbook is an excellent companion of all telecommunication executives interested in the development of telecommunications and ICT in the Asia Pacific region. It gives current status of telecom and ICT in the countries and territories of the Asia Pacific region. The APT Yearbook is served as a very useful reference on telecommunications in the region.

The APT Yearbook 2008 – To order, [click here](#).

APT Newsletter

APT Newsletter is issued electronically by APT Secretariat. It serves as a vital medium for the Secretariat to disseminate telecommunications related information, activities, development, events and other related news on the region to APT members. It also features highlights of recent and forthcoming APT activities, seminars, meetings and workshops.

[April 2009](#)[March 2009](#)[February 2009](#)

The APT Yearbook 2008 contains over 400 pages of an insight into the current status as well as future plans of telecommunications and ICT in the APT territories, covering up to 37 member countries.

Contents: The APT Yearbook features 6 Sections:

1. The APT - organisation, role, membership, activities, etc. and highlights of 25 years of Telecom-Cooperation
2. The Region - list of regional administrations and telecom related organizations
3. Member Country Profiles - Country-by-country insight into the current status of telecom & ICT, policy and regulations, future plans, list of operators and service providers, etc. of APT member countries
4. Associate Member Profiles - similar information as Section 3 for APT Associate Members
5. Affiliate Members - list of Affiliate Members along with their products/services and contact details
6. Company Directory - alphabetical list of APT Affiliate Members

The Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) is the leading organization on telecommunication and information technology for the Asia Pacific region. APT was established by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the International Telecommunication Union in 1979 by an intergovernmental agreement. The APT works actively for accelerating the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Asia Pacific region.

In order to encourage young professional's interest and in the field of ICT and to utilize their huge untapped enthusiasm and energy, the Telecommunity has established the APT Young Professionals and Students (PTYPS) Forum. The PTYPS Forum will be a platform to discuss special issues and opportunity is opened for exposure to the developments in the region. The Forum will promote capacity building in various areas of telecom activities such

as telecom policy, regulation, new technology, infrastructure development, digital divide and ICT promotion business development etc.

The success of the forthcoming Forum is depended on support and cooperation from APT member countries and on the young professionals and students from APT member countries.

The A P Telecommunity is primarily populated and funded by private sector organizations, but would seem worth exploring somewhat further. While funding is depressed by the global recession, this has also led to more interest in socio-economic research along with commercial information and interest.

Also under ESCAP auspices, and moving more to the capacity development side, is:

The Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN-APCICT)

<http://www.unapcict.org/>

UN ESCAP

Site Map Accessibility Contact

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UN-APCICT - ESCAP Centre on ICT for Development

UN-APCICT is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), located in Incheon, Republic of Korea. UN-APCICT aims to strengthen the efforts of the member countries of UNESCAP to use ICT in their socio-economic development through building human and institutional capacity for ICT.

Information and communication technologies have a central role to play in the quest for development, dignity and peace.

- Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

UN-APCICT's work is focused on three pillars:

- **Training** - To enhance the knowledge and skills in ICT for policy makers and ICT professionals, and strengthen the capacity of ICT trainers and ICT training institutions.
- **Research** - To undertake analytical studies related to human resource development in ICT.
- **Advisory** - To provide advisory services on human resource development programmes to member and associate members.

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Upcoming Events

- IT Capacity Building Programme for Women in the APEC region: Indonesia
Jakarta, Indonesia, May 25, 2009
- National Academy Workshop in Afghanistan
Kabul, Afghanistan, May 31, 2009

“An Information Society is not built by designs and intents but by concrete measurable actions. It is only when global commitments and national policies are translated into meaningful public policy development and implementation, that we can say for certain that we are making progress towards a true Information Society, and genuine e-quality for everyone, both women and men.” - Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Also on the capacity side, as mentioned earlier, would be CPRSouth and of course many good universities in the A-P region).

CPRSouth

<http://www.cprsouth.org/>

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CPRsouth4: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Tue, 03/31/2009 - 14:21 — admin

LIRNEasia, is organizing the fourth CPRsouth conference, in Negombo, Sri Lanka from 7-8 December 2009.

The conference aims to provide a forum for senior, junior and mid-career scholars to meet face-to-face and exchange ideas, establish networking opportunities and improve the quality of their scholarly work, in order to facilitate the long-term objective of fostering the next generation of active scholars and in-situ experts capable of contributing to ICT policy and regulatory reform in the region.

Please check the [Call for Abstracts](#) and [Call for Young Scholar Applications](#) to see how you may participate in this event.

Aaron Wildavsky [Call for papers](#) [Communication](#) [CPRsouth](#) [CPRsouth4](#) [policy](#) [Power](#)
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If you are submitting an application as a young scholar, please use [Young Scholar](#)

CPRsouth4 - 2009

[Conference Details](#)

[Call for Papers: "Gender, Bodies and Technology", April 22-24, 2010, Roanoke,](#)

Also with IDRC as a primary funder is LIRNEasia, with a focus on ICT policy and regulation, but also a strong research program in ICT usage at the bottom of the pyramid.

LIRNEasia

<http://lirneasia.net/projects/>



www.lirneasia.net



LIRNE.NET



IDRC * CRDI



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CPRsouth4: [Call for Abstracts](#) and [Young Scholar Applications](#) released.
Click on the links for more information.

Projects

LIRNEasia's mission is to improve the lives the people of Asia; by making it easier to use the information and communication technologies that they need; by changing the laws, policies and regulations to enable those uses; by building Asia-based human capacity through research, training, consulting and advocacy. To that end, LIRNEasia will endeavor to transform governance and regulation of ICTs in the Asian region from obstructive, inhibiting regimes, into ones that will allow opportunities for people to use ICTs in ways that will improve their lives and to expand opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators to introduce new products and services with a minimum of government interference. Our immediate priority is building a team of Asian ICT policy and regulatory professionals that can work on equal terms with the best in the world. Initially concentrating on the South Asian and Bay of Bengal areas, LIRNEasia

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Projects »

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2008-2010
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[Indicators, continued](#)
[Banded Forbearance](#)
[Benchmarks](#)
[Broadband Benchmarking QoS 2.0](#)
[NRA Website Survey: Asia-Pacific 2008](#)
[Telecom Regulatory Environment \(TRE\) assessment](#)
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LIRNEasia came up fairly often in interviews for its focus, success in influencing policy and excellent online presence, discussion and services. In spite of differences in style with DiRAP and prior rivalries, LIRNEasia and DiRAP have some considerable common ground in their objectives and their view of ICTs and development.

Definitely worth a look in terms of comparisons is DiRLAC

Digital Review 2007 of Latin America and the Caribbean: Progress and Challenges Policies for Development with ICT-Abridged document

<http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/1/33551/P33551.xml&xsl=/socinfo/tpl-i/p9f.xsl&base=/socinfo/tpl-i/top-bottom.xsl>



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→ **Digital Review 2007 of Latin America and the Caribbean:Progress and Challenges Policies for Development with ICT-Abridged document**

• Author	Sociedad de la Información
• Symbol:	LCAW.202
• Date:	June 2008

Summary
This document is an abridged version of the "Latin America and the Caribbean Digital Review 2007" report which provides an inventory of the national policies and strategies that aim to guide the different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean towards Information Societies. It aims to contribute the understanding of the situations faced by these countries as this process matures.
The report is the result of a collective effort by UNDP, ECLAC, DIRSI and ICA-IDRC. It describes the progress achieved and challenges remaining for policy development in 21 countries of the region. The initiative responds to the calls made by the countries in the current Regional Action Plan (eLAC2010), specifically to goal 60, in which the authorities aim to "Strengthen national policies for the information society from a regional perspective, including coordination and participation by public agencies, civil society and the private and academic sectors, within their respective roles and areas of responsibility, in the design and dissemination of ICT programmes."
The first part of the Digital Review 2007 deals with the development context of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in Latin America and the Caribbean, characterized by the so-called digital divide, focusing on its characteristics and dimensions. The second part of this study focuses on two selected topics that are part of the development agenda: education and health, given that they are fundamental tools in the fight against poverty. The third part analyzes the state of existing policies for the construction of Information Societies at a national and regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean; lastly, the fourth part presents the digital development profiles of the countries of the region.
The document shows that although all of the countries of the region have begun to face the challenges of becoming modern and equitable Information Societies, a great heterogeneity among the advances of the countries persists. A certain grade of political maturity can also be observed by comparing countries that are part of a second generation with countries that are recently starting with the process. These results underline the great potential for the exchange of experiences and intra-regional collaboration, in order to accelerate the learning process in the elaboration of policies that strengthen development with ICT in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Digital Review project acts as vehicle in this learning process.

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Related information

Studies of many countries were done in preparing the Review, but used as inputs to Thematic chapters rather than being published themselves – so a different format than DiRAP. Also different is that ECLAC is the producer, with IDRC and EU funding – an arrangement which took some time to build but works well at present.

African e-Index; Research ICT Africa (RIA)

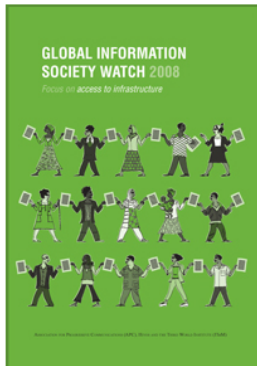
<http://link.wits.ac.za/papers/e-index-front.pdf>

Acknowledgments	4	Unit; and Amos Anyimadu, Political Science Department, University of Ghana, Accra	
Research ICT Africa!	5		
The network is hosted by the Witwatersrand University LINK Centre in Johannesburg and directed by Prof Alison Gillwald			
Contributors	6		
Chapter 1: Introduction	8		
Alison Gillwald LINK Centre, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa		Chapter 7: Namibia	106
		Christoph Stork Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit	
Chapter 2: A comparative analysis of ICT access and usage in 10 African countries	18	Chapter 8: Rwanda	120
Alison Gillwald and Steve Esselaar LINK Centre, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa		Albert Nsengiyumva National University of Rwanda and Christoph Stork Namibian Economic Policy and Research Unit	
Chapter 3: Botswana	32	Chapter 9: South Africa	130
Sebusang Sebusang, Shedden Masupe and Joseph Chumai University of Botswana		Alison Gillwald, Steve Esselaar, Patrick Burton and Aki Stavrou LINK Centre, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa	
Chapter 4: Cameroon	46	Chapter 10: Tanzania	154
Olivier Nana Nzépa and Robertine Tankeu Keutchankeu University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon		Innocent Ngalinda, Institute of Finance Management, Dar es Salaam Beda Muliagahywa University of Dar es Salaam	
Chapter 5: Ethiopia	66	Chapter 11: Uganda	162
Lishan Adam with Kifle Woldekidan University College, Addis Ababa University and Stellenbosch University		Chapter 11: Uganda	162
Chapter 6: Ghana	94	FF Tusubira, Makerere University; Irene Kaggwa, Uganda Communication Commission; and Jonathan Ongora	
Godfred Frempong, Science and Technology Policy Research Institute, Accra, Ghana; Stephen Esselaar, LINK Centre, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; Christoph Stork, Namibian Economic Policy Research		Chapter 12: Zambia	178
		Sikaaba Mulavu, SB Kanyanga and Inonge Imasiku, University of Zambia Floyd Mwenda, Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperatives, Zambia	
		Appendix: Methodology	190
		Aki Stavrou LINK Centre, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa	

One of the comments that came from several interviews was that the regional issues which DiRAP (and DiRLAC etc) cover are mostly also international issues – one jumps very quickly from country to global. In that perspective, several global reviews also provide comparators and possible partnerships for DiRAP.

Global Information Society Watch

Published by APC and ITeM, 2008
<http://www.giswatch.org/gisw2008/>



GISWatch 2008 launched at the Third Internet Governance Forum in Hyderabad, India on December 3

Global Information Society Watch 2008 (or GISWatch), published in print and online by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the Third World Institute (TWM), and Dutch development organisation Hivos, collects the perspectives of ICT academics, analysts, activists and civil society organisations from across the globe in over 50 reports.

GISWatch is both a publication and a process: it aims to build networking and advocacy capacity among civil society organisations who work for a just and inclusive information society. This is reflected in the growing number of participating organisations writing country reports – sixteen more than last year, the first year that GISWatch appeared. By doing this they hope GISWatch will impact on policy development processes in countries, regions, and at a global level.

"[Access to infrastructure] is beginning to be considered of less importance by some development funders and practitioners, including civil society and communication and information activists," argue the publishers in the book preface.

"One of the consequences of this is the development of a conventional wisdom that leaves the domain of infrastructure development to the market; to operators and investors that do not always see the broader social value of communications in society, to governments that lack capacity and often clear strategy, and to international institutions that tend to approach it in a limited and 'technocratic' way."

Contents of the GISWatch 2008 Report

Credits

Preface Anriette Esterhuysen, Loe Schout and Roberto Bissio

Introduction: Access to infrastructure. Willie Currie

THEMATIC REPORTS

Net neutrality. Peter Lange

Open standards. Sunil Abraham

Spectrum management. Ben Akoh

Trends in technology. Russell Southwood

Accessing content. Daniel Pimienta

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Institutional overview. David Souter

MEASURING PROGRESS

Toward better measures of global ICT adoption and use. Mike Jensen and Amy Mahan

REGIONAL AND COUNTRY REPORTS

Introduction. Alan Finlay

Regional reports

* North America. Monique Chartrand and Nathalie Caccamo

* Latin America and the Caribbean. Roque Gagliano, with contributions from Valeria Betancourt and Pablo Accuosto

* Africa. Abiodun Jagun

* Former Soviet Union. Jeremy Druker

* South-East Asia. Madanmohan Rao

* The Pacific. Don Hollander

Country reports

- * Argentina. Nodo TAU
- * Bangladesh. Bytes For All
- * Bosnia and Herzegovina. oneworld-platform for southeast europe (owpsee) foundation
- * Brazil. GOPAI (Research Group on Public Policies for Access to Information), University of São Paulo
- * Bulgaria. BlueLink Information Network
- * Cameroon. PROTEGE QV
- * Chile. Women in Connection (Mujeres en Conexión)
- * Colombia. Colnodo
- * Congo, Democratic Republic of (DRC). Alternatives
- * Congo, Republic of. AZUR Développement
- * Costa Rica. Cooperativa Sulá Batsú
- * Croatia. ZaMirNET
- * Ecuador. IMAGINAR
- * Egypt. ArabDev
- * Ethiopia. Ethiopian Free and Open Source Software Network (EFOSSNET)
- * India. IT for Change
- * Jamaica. Caribbean Programme in Telecommunications Policy and Management, University of the West Indies
- * Kazakhstan. Andrew Beklemishev
- * Kenya. Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet)
- * Korea, Republic of. Korean Progressive Network Jinbonet
- * Kyrgyzstan. Civil Initiative on Internet Policy
- * Mexico. LaNeta
- * Nigeria. Fantsuam Foundation
- * Pakistan. Bytes For All
- * Paraguay. Radio Viva FM 90.1
- * Peru. CONDESAN (Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion)
- * Romania. StrawberryNet Foundation
- * Rwanda. Rwanda Development Gateway Centre, National University of Rwanda
- * Senegal. APC West and Central Africa ICT4D Network
- * South Africa. SANGONeT
- * Spain. Pangea
- * Switzerland. Comunica-ch
- * Tajikistan. Civil Internet Policy Initiative (CIPI)
- * Tanzania. Tanzania Internet Service Providers Association (TISPA)
- * Uganda. Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) and Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)
- * Uruguay. ObservaTIC (Faculty of Social Sciences, Universidad de la República)
- * Uzbekistan. GIPI Uzbekistan
- * Zambia. Panos Southern Africa

'The Global Information Technology Report 2007-2008'

World Economic Forum, INSEAD, 2008

<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Global%20Information%20Technology%20Report/index.htm>



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- Gender Gap Report
- Financial Development Report
- Africa Competitiveness Report
- Arab World Competitiveness Report
- Latin America, Private Investment in Infrastructure
- Lisbon Review
- Country Studies
- Partner Institutes

The Global Information Technology Report 2008-2009

Published 26 March 2009



The Report stresses the importance of ICT as a catalyst for growth in the current global turmoil

Denmark and Sweden once again lead the rankings of *The Global Information Technology Report 2008-2009*, released for the eighth consecutive year by the World Economic Forum. The United States follows suit, up one position from last year, thus confirming its pre-eminence in networked readiness in the current times of economic slowdown. Singapore (4), Switzerland (5) and the other Nordic countries together with the Netherlands and Canada complete the top 10.

The Report underlines that good education fundamentals and high levels of technological readiness and innovation are essential engines of growth needed to overcome the current economic crisis. Under the theme "Mobility in a Networked World", this year's Report places a particular focus on the relationship and interrelations between mobility and ICT.

Rankings 2008-2009 Top Ten

>> [Rankings in full](#)

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	5.85
2	Sweden	5.84
3	USA	5.68
4	Singapore	5.67
5	Switzerland	5.58
6	Finland	5.53
7	Iceland	5.50
8	Norway	5.49
9	Netherlands	5.48
10	Canada	5.41

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Under the theme Fostering Innovation through Networked Readiness, this year's Report places a particular focus on the role of networked readiness in spurring innovation. The Report uses the Networked Readiness Index (NRI), covering a total of 127 economies in 2007-2008, to measure the degree of preparation of a nation or community to participate in and benefit from ICT developments. It also describes policies for ICT. Sponsored by Cisco Systems, the Global Information Technology Report series is a joint project between the World Economic Forum and an educational organization, INSEAD.

OECD Information Technology Outlook 2008

http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en_2649_33757_41892820_1_1_1_1,00.html

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January 2009 (print)

Information technology (IT) and broadband are major drivers of research, innovation, economic growth and social change. The 2008 edition of the *OECD Information Technology Outlook* analyses recent developments in the IT goods and services industries, and suggests that the outlook is for continued long-term growth, constrained by the currently very uncertain macroeconomic environment in OECD countries. Cross-border investment, trade, and mergers and acquisitions remain high, and ICTs drive globalisation in general. The industry is rapidly restructuring, and China and India are major

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- Links to IT Policy Resources
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Brand new edition released end-2008
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Table of contents

Highlights

Chapter 1. The IT Industry: Recent Developments and Outlook

Chapter 2. Globalisation of the IT Sector

Chapter 3. ICT Research and Development and Innovation
Chapter 4. Broadband and ICT Access and Use by Households and Individuals
Chapter 5. Digital Content in Transition
Chapter 6. Economic Implications of Broadband
Chapter 7. ICT Policy Developments
Annex. Methodology and Definitions
Sample data
Table 1.3. Top 50 ICT firms ranked by revenue in 2006
Figure 1.6. Top 250 ICT firms' performance trends, 2000-07
Figure 1.13. Worldwide semiconductor market by region, 1990-2009
Figure 1.16. Share of ICT valued added in business sector value added, 1995 and 2006
Figure 1.18. Share of ICT specialist occupations in the total economy, 1995 and 2007
Figure 1.20. Venture capital investments in ICT as a percentage of all venture capital investment, 2006
Figure 1.21. Quarterly venture capital investments in the ICT sector in the United States, Q1 1995-Q3 2008
Figure 1.23. OECD ICT spending by market segment, 2007
Table 1.A1.6. Top 10 software firms
Table 1.A1.7. Top 10 Internet firms
Figure 2.1. World trade in ICT goods, 1996-2007
Figure 2.4. Top importers and exporters of ICT goods, 1996-2007
Figure 2.12. OECD and major emerging economies' computer and information services trade, 2006
Figure 2.14. Electronics production, 2005 and 2008
Figure 2.18. Value of cross-border M&A deals in ICT and non-ICT sectors, 1995-2007
Figure 3.4. Growth of the largest R&D-spending sectors in the OECD area, 1993-2005
Figure 3.8. R&D expenditures in the United States, the EU15, Japan and Korea by ICT sub-sectors, 1996, 2003 and 2005
Figure 3.14 Reported R&D expenditures of top 100 ICT R&D spending firms, by sector, 2000 and 2006
Table 3.1. Top ICT R&D spenders: Absolute expenditure, 2006 and 2007
Figure 3.19. Japanese ICT R&D expenditures, in ICT and non-ICT sectors, 2006
Figure 4.2. Household access to the Internet in selected OECD countries, 1996-2007
Figure 4.5. Internet access by high, medium and low education level in selected OECD countries, 2007
Figure 4.12. Impact of broadband on selected Internet activities, selected OECD countries, 2007
Figure 5.1. Broadband growth, OECD total, 2003-2008
Table 5.1. Digital content market size and growth, 2007 or latest available year
Figure 5.5. Bandwidth requirements of selected digital content types, in Mbit/s, 2008
Figure 5.7. Major film market revenues, 2006 (excluding TV market)
Table 7.A1.1 Ranking of ICT policy areas, 2008


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- Table of contents
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Highlights

The **Information Economy Report 2006: The Development Perspective** provides unique data on the adoption of ICT by enterprises in developing countries. It also explores ICT policy options in a developing-country context and proposes a framework for national ICT policy reviews and for the design and assessment of pro-poor e-strategies.

The **Report's** analysis of trends in core ICT indicators such as the use of Internet and mobile phone, as well as the role of broadband in promoting the information economy, concludes that the diffusion of ICT in developing countries still needs government intervention in areas where private providers might be discouraged to go because of costs associated to

UN e-Government Survey 2008: From e-Government to Connected Governance

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN028607.pdf>

Preface

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

PART I – United Nations e-Government Survey

Introduction

The Need for Connected Governance

The Second Generation e-Government Paradigm

From e-Government to Connected Governance: A Framework

Recent Trends towards Connected Governance

Connected Governance: The Key Message

Assessing e-Government Readiness

The Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Data Measurement

The United Nations e-Government Readiness Index

The Web Measure Index

Stages of e-Government Evolution

Telecommunication Infrastructure Index

Human Capital Index

The e-Participation Conceptual Framework

Data and Methodology for the e-Participation Index

E-Information

E-Consultation

E-Decision-Making

E-Government Readiness Rankings

Regional e-Government Readiness

Africa

Central Africa

Eastern Africa

North Africa

Southern Africa
Central America
Central Asia
Western Asia
Southern Europe

West Africa
North America
Eastern Asia
Europe
Western Europe

The Americas
South America
Southern Asia
Eastern Europe
Oceania

The Caribbean
Asia
South-Eastern Asia
Northern Europe

Web Measurement Assessment

Government Provision of e-Services
Stages of Service Delivery by Country

E-Participation

E-Information
E-Consultation
E-Decision-Making

PART II – From e-Government to Connected Governance

Origins and Emergence of e-Government

From Static Websites to Integrative Portals
Centralized versus Decentralized Governance
Electronic Capacities and YK
Conclusion
Progress and Performance
Infrastructure
Integration
Transformation
Inter-jurisdictional Partnering
Wikinomics, Web & e-Democracy
Conclusion
Developed and Developing Countries – Convergence or Divergence?
E-Government as a Global Project?
Federalism as a Key Design Principle
Conclusion

Back Office Issues in e-Government Operations

Introductory Remarks
Back Office Defined
Vertical and Horizontal Integration
Operational and Strategic Integration
Drivers for Back Office Integration
Cost
Service Improvement/Efficiency
Service Innovation
Increased Control
Modernisation
Delivery Methodologies
In-house Delivery
Strengths
Weaknesses
Strategic Partnerships
Strengths
Weaknesses
Outsourcing
Strengths
Weaknesses
Managing Delivery
Organizational Culture
Governance
Staffing Transition
Training and Development
Knowledge Management/Transfer
Technology
Document Control

Managing Consultants
Redesigning Processes
Concluding Remarks

Conclusions and Policy Issues

ANNEX I Tables

ANNEX II Technical Notes and Methodology

Tables

Top Countries in the e-Government Readiness Index
The Next Countries
Regional e-Government Readiness Rankings
Web Measurement Assessment : The Top Countries
Web Assessment : The Next Countries (-)
Stage II Characteristics of National Portal/Websites
Linkages between Websites in Countries
Online Submission
Interactive Services
Some Connected Presence Services
Provision of Services by Sector
Scores by Stages, Selected Countries
Countries with the Lowest Aggregate Utilization : Range – %
E-Participation Index : Top Countries
E-Participation Profile of United Nations Member States
Quality and Relevance of e-Participation Initiative, Selected Countries
Countries Providing e-Information
Quality and Relevance of e-Consultation
E-Decision-Making
Internet Usage and Population Statistics

Figures

Evolving Approach to Public Service Delivery
ICT-enabled Connected Governance
E-Government Model
E-Government Model
Regional Average of e-Government Readiness
E-Government Readiness of Africa
E-Government Readiness of the Americas
E-Government Readiness in Asia
E-Government Readiness in Europe
Government Websites
Head of State Websites
Some Transactional Presence Services
Number of Countries with Interactive Services
E-Consulting Services
Transactional Services
E-Government Service Delivery
Stages of E-Government , Selected Countries
Transactional Services: Top Countries
E-Participation Index: Top Countries
E-Participation Utilization Levels
Elements of the e-Brasil Vision
Africa Internet Users
Transformation from an Individual Agency Model to an Enterprise Model
The Partnering Continuum
The Impact of the Internet and Other ICT on Parliament
Example of 'Vertical' Integration of Educational Records
Key Drivers for Back Office Integration and Shared Service Models
Simplified Governance Model for Delivery of Back Office Integration
Governance Model for Delivery of a Customer Contact Centre
Functional Responsibilities in Governance Structure –

Customer Service Centre Project
Sample Document Control Audit Template
Document Categorisation and Prioritisation
Transformation Agenda for Connected Governance (Harman & Roy)

Boxes

Achieving Connected Governance: What the Government Does
Best Practice – European Union
Brazil – House of Representatives e-Participation
Chuncheon City Online Services
Singapore Personal Access (SingPass)
Regional Best Practice - Ireland
Regional Best Practice - Malta
No Online Presence
Head of State Websites that Encourage Citizen Engagement
Countries that Use E-mail to Update Their Citizens
Countries that Use RSS to Update and Involve Citizens
Countries that Use an Open Web Forum for Discussing Topics
Governments that Publish Findings/Results of Citizen Opinions, Including e-Opinions,
The French National Commission of Public Debate
The Netherlands e-Citizen Charter

ITU – World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database 2008 (12th Edition)

<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/world/world.html>

ICT Statistics	ITU Sectors Newsroom Events Publications Statistics About ITU
Statistics	World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database 2008 (12th Edition)
Publications and Database	 ORDER NOW ! New update - February 2009
Events	The World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database contains time series data for the years 1960, 1965, 1970 and annually from 1975-2007 for around 100 sets of telecommunication statistics (updated) covering telephone network size and dimension, mobile services, quality of service, traffic, staff, tariffs, revenue and investment.
Links to National ICT Data	Data for 2007 are available for selected indicators such as main (fixed) telephone lines in operation, mobile cellular subscribers, internet users and internet subscribers.
Presentations	Selected demographic, macro-economic and broadcasting statistics are also included.
Standards and Definitions	Data for over 200 economies are available. Notes explaining data exceptions are also included. The data are collected from an annual questionnaire sent out by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the ITU. Additional data are obtained from reports provided by telecommunication ministries, regulators and operators and from ITU staff reports. In some cases, estimates are made by ITU staff; these are noted in the database.
International Cooperation	This database uses the latest version of the World Bank's "STARS" data retrieval system, WIN*STARS v5.0. It has an improved user interface, better navigation and display of HTML pages, ability to launch Adobe PDF and MS Excel files within the browser, percentage change and index functions, multidimensional "pivot-table" view and export, multiple country table views, combined definition, source, and footnote information, mapping, map printing and saving, a choice of data selection techniques, and several data export formats.
About us - Contact	The database is available either for one-time purchase (single issue) or as an annual subscription. The one-time purchase is available either via the CD-ROM or as a download via the Internet. The annual subscription is available either via the CD-ROM or via the Internet and can be accessed for a period of one year starting from delivery of the access key. The subscription service is available for single-user or multi-user licenses.
	Updates and revisions of the data will be posted to the ITU website approximately every three months. Subscribers are entitled to BDT Market Information and Statistics (STAT) reference services such as clarification of data, sources and methodology used.

The World Bank ICT at-a-Glance country tables

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20459133~menuPK:1192714~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html>

The screenshot shows the 'Data & Statistics' section of The World Bank website. The main heading is 'Data & Statistics'. Below it, there is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to 'Data' and a 'GO' button. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Data > By Topic > ICT at a Glance Tables. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with categories: Overview, Country Classification, Data, By Topic, Statistical Manual, Programs, Publications, FAQ, and Site Tools. The 'Data' category is selected, showing a list of links including 'About Data', 'Key Statistics', 'Quick Reference', 'By Topic', 'Millennium development goals', 'At a glance tables', 'Principal global indicators', 'Maps: Online Atlas of MDGs', 'Maps: Geo', 'Tools', and 'Errata'. The 'By Topic' link is highlighted. The main content area is titled 'ICT at a Glance Tables' and contains the following text:

The tables presented here are updated versions of the ones featured in the World Bank publication *Information and Communications for Development 2006: Global Trends and Policies*.

The World Bank ICT at-a-Glance country tables present the most recent country-specific ICT data drawn from many sources.

The data in the tables are categorized into three sections:

- **Economic and social context** provides a snapshot of the country's macroeconomic and social environment. (Data Sources: [UNDP](#), [UNESCO](#), [United Nations](#) and [World Bank](#))
- **ICT sector structure** provides an overview of regulatory and policy status in the telecommunication sector. (Data Sources: [ITU](#), [WEF](#))
- **ICT sector performance** provides statistical data on the ICT sector with indicators for access, quality, affordability, institutional efficiency and sustainability, and ICT applications. (Data Sources: [Global Insight](#), [WITS](#), [ITU](#), [Netcraft](#), [UNDESA](#), [UNPAN](#), and [World Bank](#))

Definitions and Sources and Country classification are also provided.

Please select a country from the list below to access the database.

A - B - C - D - E - F - G - H - I - J - K - L - M - N - O - P - Q - R - S - T - U - V - W - X - Y - Z

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Overview

Statistics form the foundation upon which sound policy is built. The mission of the World Bank's Data Group is to provide high quality national and international statistics to clients within and outside the Bank and to improve the capacity of member countries to produce and use statistical information. As part of the international statistical system, the Data Group works with other organizations on new statistical methods, data collection activities, and statistical capacity-building programs. This group also coordinates the analytical and statistical work related to monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

As the demand for good quality statistical data increases, timely and reliable statistics are key inputs to the broad development strategy. Improvements in the quality and quantity of data on all aspects of development are essential if we are to achieve the goal of a world without poverty. Good data are needed to set baselines, identify effective public and private actions, set goals and targets, monitor progress and evaluate impacts. They are also an essential tool of good government, providing a means for people to assess what governments do and helping them to participate directly in the development process.

To learn about each topic listed below, click on the corresponding link.

- * Principles and values governing our statistical data
- * Methodologies for using data
- * Data quality and effectiveness

This Section concludes with two integrated initiatives, LIRNE.NET and World Dialogue on Regulation, both supported by IDRC and InfoDev for many years, the 'parents' of the regional networks LIRNEasia, DIRSI and RIA. LIRNE and WDR came up in some conversations as potential partners of DiRAP.

LIRNE.NET
<http://lirne.net/>

LIRNE.NET is a Strategic Collaboration between:

- # Center for Communication, Media and Information Technologies (CMI) at Aalborg University, Denmark
- # Comunica, Montevideo, Uruguay
- # DIRSI (Regional Dialogue on the Information Society / Diálogo Regional sobre la Sociedad de la Información), Lima, Peru
- # Economics of Infrastructures Section, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
- # LINK Centre at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
- # LIRNEasia, Colombo, Sri Lanka
- # Media@LSE Programme at the London School of Economics
- # Research ICT Africa!, Johannesburg, South Africa

Mission

- * To facilitate telecom reform and infrastructure development throughout the world - through research, training, dialogue, policy and regulatory advice;
- * To build human capital in the area as the foundation for effective regulation and governance for new network economies.

Activities

- * Research Activities and Reports
- * World Dialogue on Regulation for Network Economies
- * External Training Initiatives (for Government, Industry and NGOs)
- * Expert Analysis & Commentary on Current Issues

Governance

LIRNE is managed from the Centre for ICT (CICT) in Denmark and Comunica in Uruguay. William Melody (CICT) is general manager and Amy Mahan (Comunica) is the network coordinator.

A steering committee is made up of one representative from each of the regions, one from Comunica, and one external advisor. The members of the steering committee are:

- # Hernan Galperin (DIRSI, Latin America)
- # Alison Gillwald (LINK Centre & RIA!, Africa)
- # Anders Henten (CICT, European Centres)
- # Amy Mahan (Comunica, Global coordination)
- # Rohan Samarajiva (LIRNEasia, Asia)
- # Randy Spence (IDRC, Advisor)

LIRNE Network Members

- # CMI
- # Comunica
- # DIRSI
- # Economics of Infrastructures
- # LINK Centre
- # LIRNEasia

Media@LSE

Research ICT Africa!

Click here for a list of upcoming events where you can meet LIRNE.NET members.

LIRNE.NET is registered as a non-profit association in Denmark. Global activities are coordinated by Fundación Comunica, a registered foundation in Uruguay.

World Dialogue on Regulation

<http://www.regulateonline.org/>



regulateonline.org

World Dialogue on Regulation for Network Economies



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The World Dialogue on Regulation for Network Economies is concerned with regulation and governance for network economies. We conduct research, facilitate online dialogue and discussion among experts, and publish and distribute papers, reports and other relevant information. The dialogue theme for the current research cycle is "Indicators and Benchmarks of Performance in ICT Development".

Hello Regulator?

Wednesday, 05 December 2007



Telecom NRA's Information and Communication Practices

Some Telecom National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) provide extensive information via their websites and hold public consultations on a range of topics. Others offer only a few scraps of static information and are generally inaccessible. Why the discrepancy?

In this interactive session prepared for the **Global Knowledge 3 (GK3) conference**, civil society, researchers and regulators will discuss regulatory transparency and effectiveness, using telecom regulators' websites as a discussion tool. For example, what kind of information should be made available via regulators' websites? And what are some effective practices in this regard?

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Featured Resource



Book:

Diversifying Participation in Network Development:

The final report from the WDR 3rd research cycle can be downloaded or ordered in

3. Indicators of Usage

a. Book Sales

From IDRC: Here is the report from Sage. These numbers are not as good as I had hoped, but definitely represent a monumental leap from the numbers that were being reported by Southbound. When we decided to take this route for DirAP publication, one of the considerations was selecting a publisher for the long-term, as we agreed that they must have sufficient time to establish the product with their market. Hopefully, Sage has learned some lessons from the 07-08 edition that will be applied to the 09-10 edition.

We have sold 252 copies within India; 25 in other South Asian countries; exported 100 copies to our office in California and 30 copies to our office in London. We have given away 115 promotional copies. It is difficult for me to provide profiles of the organizations / individual to whom these copies have been sold as most of our business is conducted via intermediaries in the book trade.

This was the first time we published a volume of this nature. I am confident that we will be able to handle the promotion and sale of the new volume much better in light of the experience we have gained. What was most disappointing was the lack of sales in other parts of Asia. We are working with the sales team in charge of Southeast Asia and Asia Pacific to see what can be done for the 2009-10 volume.

b. IDRC Website Visits

Here is the first set of stats. These are from the IDRC webpage: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-116715-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html. These stats are for the main page and all subpages of the online book. To date on this book there have been over 800,000 page views and almost 16,000 unique visitors. More stats coming...

	Page Views	Unique Visitors		Page Views	Unique Visitors
2009-04	12,671	1,669	2008-07	27,504	1,304
2009-03	23,866	1,856	2008-06	3,624	407
2009-02	17,823	1,583	2008-05	1,753	367
2009-01	22,617	1,857	2008-04	1,555	351
2008-12	23,190	1,768	2008-03	1,393	345
2008-11	20,464	1,879	2008-02	2,809	295
2008-10	23,704	1,841	2008-01	1,861	318
2008-09	23,409	1,537	2007-12	993	235
2008-08	12,237	816	2007-11	522	154

A bit more: this is from Google Book Search, where the book is 100% viewable :

(1) 949 Book Visits

A Book Visit is registered each time a unique user views your book. This statistic includes non-content page views (such as the 'About this book' page) as well as full content page views.

(2) 13,599 total Pages Viewed

The number of unique pages a user views in a given session (counted as a 24 hour period). Regardless of the number of times that a unique user views a page, it can only be registered once. For example, if User A first views pages 14, 15, 16, 43 and 44, and then returns to pages 14, 15 and 16, only 5 Pages Viewed are registered.

Google also geographically maps visitors, but unfortunately won't let me copy the map. In April 2009, though, I can tell you that the majority of Book Visits came from the US, the UK, India, and Malaysia. Close behind were China, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Australia. Following up: various countries: Viet Nam, Japan, the Philippines, Myanmar, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, UAE, South Africa, Algeria, Turkey, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Ireland, Portugal, Brazil, and Chile.

In discussion in Penang, the Editorial Board indicated that the figures for unique visitors provide a better indicator, and are many times lower than desirable.

c. Academic Citations

Annex 1 contains citations from Academic Search Premier (4), Business Source Premier (1) and Google Scholar (108). Some are linked to DiRAP participants, but many are not. References for other research studies are one major category.

d. Internet References

Below is a rough table of references on the Internet TO the publication in question, as measured by the number of hits on Google web search. These numbers do NOT measure/include numbers accessing the publication itself on its own website(s) – so are ‘references to’ and ‘talk about.’

<i>Google</i>	<i>Yahoo</i>		
103,000	28,400	“Digital Review of Asia Pacific”	DiRAP
93,300	296,000	“Global Information Technology Report”	GITR
45,500	97,600	“LIRNEasia”	LAsia
37,500	91,700	“Asia Pacific Telecommunity”	APT
29,700	57,300	OECD “Information Technology Outlook”	OECD-ITL
16,000	48,800	ESCAP Centre on ICT for Development “APCICT”	UN-APCICT
12,000	47,400	World Bank “ICT at-a-Glance” Database	WB-Glance
11,200	57,500	“Global Information Society Watch”	GISW
9,390	26,700	“World Dialogue on Regulation”	WDR
8,870	45,900	“Research ICT Africa”	RIA
7,820	29,600	UNCTAD “Information Economy Report”	UNCTAD-IER
5,100	23,500	ITU “World Telecommunication Indicators” Database	ITU-WTI

The first 100 hits for DiRAP on Google web search (April 2009) are reproduced in Annex 2. After the first handful of DiRAP-involved institutions, they move quickly to UN-APCICT,

researchsea, CCOHS Headlines, Amazon, APNIC, ANU, Google Books, ADB, etc, etc - and the list goes on like this if you cycle through the entries online. It is worth scrolling through; DiRAP would appear to be referenced often and by a wide variety of people and institutions. Interview feedback below touches on reasons including Sage's ability to 'name drop,' DiRAP's 7-year longevity and DiRAP's value as a reference to different readers.

These numbers should be taken as very preliminary and partial indicators – the numbers depend highly on the particular “words” searched, on length of presence on the Internet – so are snapshots of different-length histories.

Following is some further information from tools including Yahoo Siteexplorer, and on Statcounter and Google Analytics, with thanks to Suchit Nanda. All are free; the latter two require login or code to be inserted, so are really only available to DiRAP, IDRC (website owners). This kind of tracking and analysis recommends itself for DiRAP use on the revamped website; it doesn't have any history to show trends, but if started now, produces a LOT of information on usage and users which is useful to both content development *and* website design – e.g. visitor entry and exit pages, all pages in between, method of entry, length of visit, browser and equipment used, geographical location and more.

e. Links to Website

	Yahoo Sitexplorer	
	Pages	InLinks
WDR	4,471	17,723
LAsia	8,525	14,224
GITR	10	7,438
RIA	261	7,059
UN-APCICT	2,153	2,199
APT	1	1,966
GISW	1,627	764
DiRAP	366	548
OECD-ITL	2	492
WB-Glance	1	409
ITU-WTI	1	190
UNCTAD-IER	1	68

Yahoo Siteexplorer; <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/search/siteexplorer/> details

- All pages that are indexed by Yahoo!, within a domain, including any subpages. Note: You can explore any individual result page by clicking the Explore URL link next to it.
- Inlinks to subpages that are indexed by Yahoo!.

The latter are interesting, again showing a wide variety of institutions and countries for DiRAP :

<https://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/search?p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.digital-review.org&fr=sfp&bwm=i>

If you authenticate the site (step by step instructions), you get additional on linked websites such as Crawled Pages, All Known Pages, Known Hosts on This Site, Hosts linking to Site, Domains linking to Site, Hosts Outlinked from Site, Domains Outlinked from Site.

Again, these figures are sensitive to the particular url used and length of time on the Internet, so should be viewed with caution. The urls used are:

WDR	http://www.regulateonline.org/
LAsia	http://www.lirneasia.net/
GITR	http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/ Global%20Information%20Technology%
RIA	http://www.researchictafrica.net/
UN-APCICT	http://www.unapcict.org/
APT	http://www.aptsec.org/index.html
GISW	http://www.giswatch.org/
DiRAP	http://www.digital-review.org/
OECD-ITL	http://www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en_2649_33757_41892820_1_1_1_1,00.html
WB-Glance	http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20459133~menuPK:1192714~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html
ITU-WTI	http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/world/world.html
UNCTAD-IER	http://www.unctad.org/Templates/WebFlyer.asp?intItemID=4462&lang=1
Statcounter:	http://www.statcounter.com/
Google Analytics:	http://www.google.com/analytics/index.html

Going further, some interviews suggest ways DiRAP could (and should) know its audiences better. Aiming for understanding their utilization in detail - and even outcomes of utilization, is ambitious, and goes beyond surveys, but knowledge producers increasingly do some of this kind of research as part of their operation, sometimes through supporting PhD research/dissertation on usage and its implications.

4. Feedback from Interviews

In the Skype or telephone discussions, my TORs were on hand as headings for discussion. Some discussions proceeded that way, others with contributors leading with main views and suggestions, still others with some feedback from me first on what I have been learning. Numbers are too small to draw any tight conclusions, but on the other hand, a lot of interesting perspectives emerge. Those centrally involved in DiRAP have considered all of what follows, in one form or another; hopefully this compilation and analysis may be useful at this time. I first grouped responses under the main headings of my Terms of Reference – this is the ‘raw data’ that follows here – with Section 5. providing analysis of competition + usage indicators + feedback.

The comments are not quite word for word – I took notes and did as well as I could to capture the thoughts digitally right after the discussion.

a. Position / Competition

Position of the DirAP publication in the market place (which is inside and outside Asia), vis-a-vis similar publications, in comparison with other initiatives in the ICT&D field

My general impression is that it looks useful enough but to the limited extent I do work on non-OECD countries in the region I would generally go direct to the regulator's website. The background info would be useful as a quick primer on non-OECD countries.

I'm not aware of anything particularly similar, am not sure what the Global IT Report does in this line; and I like the mix of country reports and issue papers.

The Development Gateway (ICT4D) and DiRAP have opposite issues. The former posts research and related work as it gets done, but has no periodic synthesis. DiRAP as a paper publication *is* a periodic synthesis, but with none of the ongoing/current knowledge sifting and presenting which would be valuable within countries, particularly if it were accompanied by annual or periodic geographic and thematic synthesis.

Why is DiRAP limited to Asia Pacific? Its subject matter is universal, but the title unnecessarily restricts the audience. The need for summary, synthesis and interpretation becomes more crucial as the volume of research of widely varying type and quality is expanding rapidly.

There is a related matter of the future of LIRNE.NET AND WDR, both of which have made contributions here. The websites have built up a large following, particularly through the WDR newsletter distributed electronically. This audience should be directed to whatever comes out of your review. Maybe something new is needed.

As far as I know there is no similar initiative/publication. This does not necessarily mean DirAP fulfills the market needs completely. This should be looked more from the point of how far DirAP has been used by researchers. Has it been cited enough? My personal understanding is it

hasn't. What this implies is that DirAP still does not fully meet the user needs and there is substantial room for improvement.

DiRAP positions itself as a reference; it's value will be only clear over time. There should by now be signs of traction. It is on the academic side and mostly descriptive – quite an archive as a base for policy thinking.

There are currently many journals and reviews, but this is different. The mix is difficult to achieve and maintain among objectives including capacity development

DiRAP is doing what ITU, UN, WB are doing, some parts better. The synthesis papers are particularly useful, making knowledge relevant to the World.

The Latin American Digital Review is done by ECLAC in the OSILAC initiative, with EU and IDRC support. The 2008 Review and earlier publications were done by theme specialists, based around main issues in country policies and plans – infrastructure, finance, universal access, public administration, education, health, etc). Some country reports were done ad inputs, but not published in the Review. There is a problem of 'un-evenness,' as with.

There are other good research and reference sources like John Ure's – several editions - "Telecommunications Development in Asia." (http://books.google.com/books?id=GUehQsdzw8C&dq=john+ure+telecommunications+development+in+asia&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=9soWSpXGLInEMaCR4K8I&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4#PP1,M1.)

Many users look for current data and information. Much is available, and if they don't find it at one place, they go elsewhere. A common core of data is needed for research and policy users, and country authors can improve data sets when they have better sources. Some of DiRAP's competitors do this well; authors agree to update data as part of their research efforts.

Keep in mind that the private sector does social consequence research too, and there are organizations like NECTEC in Thailand - nothing on openness and IPR at present, but a considerable amount on the public side of ICT&D.

One of my frustrations with publications on ICT4D is what they choose to cover and what they do not, and the compatibility (comparative value) of the research results to fuel more research, thinking and action. I confess that I have a particular mental map when it comes to ICT4D. Nevertheless, I do understand the need for publications to define and sustain a niche. I think it is timely that you are re-visiting the niche for DirAP as many multilateral and regional publications tend to converge in certain areas under the label of digital divide, information society and knowledge society.

A wonderful publication. There should be chapters for all countries. But I have only read some portions selectively. I think DiRAP's use is lower than its value.

b. , State of Practice

Specificity and significance of DirAP as a publication about **state-of-practice**, emerging trends and issues pertaining to ICT&D in the region and explore its potential

How DirAP is **perceived and used** by its targeted market segments - ICT&D policy and decision-makers, ICT&D practitioners and experts, Researchers and educators, NGOs, Government, Academia, Private sector

For whatever reason, I would have to be honest and say I don't think I've cited from it, but I have lent a copy to students writing on the subject.

All I have is usage data I get from web. The top hits are from funders, partners or prominent ICT4D publications. Not sure how far it is being used by the researchers.

The current pre-publishing period is too long. Given that ICT changes happen too fast, by the time the publication is out most of the information is outdated.

1. Reduce the publishing time.
2. Run a regularly updated web site parallel to the publication so that it provides the latest information (especially stats) to all or registered users.

Timeliness is a big problem. Authors use information from the recent past when writing. The edition is not available until 12 months after the authors have finished their last revisions, and then 6 more months until it is available online. Many users won't bother with information that is often 2 years out of date.

I don't know any policy makers who read DiRAP, though some policy researchers, analysts, officials etc may. There is much competition on the Internet now, from analytical pieces to media and newsy coverage of issues. Policy makers do pay attention to what people are saying about the issues, as well as analysis, and that is in DiRAP's favor..

A citation analysis should be done – after 4 editions, citations are a meaningful indicator of scholarly usage.

The lengthy gestation period means the contents are outdated by up to 2-3 years.

A problem for me is the less than credible, rose-colored spectacles through which some authors view developments in countries that are going through turmoil.

The sometimes uneven quality of quantitative data between chapters limits my use of DiRAP as a reference.

I would use it more in teaching, and in the training courses we do often, but it is quite out of date when published. It has many potential audiences including students, academic research, practitioners in different sectors and policy makers and stakeholders. DiRAP may need to prioritize and target its markets more specifically or strategically.

It is much more difficult to know audiences and usage if you are not interacting with them online. Some opportunity to interact is important, but worrying about it isn't. You tend to get a small talkative group, and a lot more who observe but don't participate. Commentary and interpretation improve the knowledge – people listen to and reference current 'informed public discourse' quite heavily relative to less current and more academic publications.

It is hard survive without the online activity, services, users and collaborators. DiRAP could become the reference of choice for much research and practice. It is much better than top-down WB, ITU, UN publications, dominated by bureaucracies.

No one but the private consultancies covers costs on ICT reports – and they are providing company information. Even the ITU that sells reports for \$50-\$250 doesn't come close to covering costs. DiRAP is very much on the 'public' goods side ICT research, so should forget about sustainability through sales. Sales and publisher can be good for reach, but sustainability without donor funding comes down to a lot of co-production in the network and a big audience.

DiRAP has a lot of good information, very impressive but I think not used. I have never consciously referred to it. So much good research is not used – it's not just dissemination, but managing content and targeting audiences. I was reminded by our talk to take another look, and it has excellent aspects and much potential.

DiRAP has a good reputation in spite of great diversity and the unevenness that goes with it.

I don't really have any strong views on the points you raised; apart from writing a chapter of it, I haven't really used the publication in my regular work activities.

I regard DiRAP as a valuable, unique source which I use as the main set text in my graduate course on 'Distance Education in Asia'.

ICT used to be supply driven; now, *specially* at the bottom of the pyramid, applications enable services which drive infrastructure. Demand is at least 50% the driver. (This has nothing directly to do with DiRAP; I just threw it in because it seemed interesting).

It is important to identify key markets and what they think.

In my development work experience there is a huge gap between project work and project sponsorship. When the "report" is completed for the sponsors, the usual outcome is a BLACK HOLE. Often funds are not allocated in advance for important follow-ups or additional sponsors lined up. Why? Many reasons, but organizationally what is missing is the concept of a project manager, someone who is hands on, monitors the project, can decide on shifts in priorities or follow-ons. Sponsors would probably be quite resistant to engaging consultants as PMs, but I think DiRAP could do the whole development community a service by homing in on this level of analysis, highlighting the inadequacies of existing "best practices".

DiRAP has large potential value in making the range of country and thematic information more accessible – particularly the country information, as there is more competition on the thematic side. Thematic synthesis rooted in country knowledge is particularly valuable – DiRAP should push further in this direction.

DiRAP is a multidisciplinary platform that should not be discarded. Perhaps it could be brought together with similar initiatives, and the group resourced sufficiently to do the several main components really well.

DiRAP should not go too academic, that would constrain it too much. A balance with the eclectic is important.

The research generally seems not to be sufficiently problem-solving in focus. It is too discursive and 'academic' in tone and in length. Having said that, I do think that more young scholars can be brought into the arena, and DiRAP has done a good job in widening the net. But it would be good to brainstorm with them about focus.

Unevenness is the biggest problem, especially in terms of data. If there could be a common template, people will go to the international organization sources they trust, even if that data is often suspect. DiRAP tends to have snapshots, of limited use. Time series and consistent data would make it much more valuable – they are available elsewhere, and people tend to go there.

Very good publication – particularly the focus on latest developments and where they are heading.

I wish we had more like DiRAP, but people may like it for their shelves more than regular use. If so, listening to users is the key to changing

Wonderful publication, very expensive, very valuable to the people involved, but doesn't translate into usage. I don't really see the economics of it.

Would anyone read it all? It is all worth reading, but no, it is definitely a reference, to pursue or peruse a country or a theme.

c. Policy Influence

What content in DirAP has potential in driving significant ICT public policy, and how to reach potential users in the region, responsible for / engaged in ICT&D public policy

In terms of influence, I guess all I would say is that a publication on its own has very little influence in general. It needs to be backed up by other on-the-ground actions such as presentations and advisory work. (The other way you have influence with policy-makers is, of course, to do a league table - though that creates its own headaches.)

The type of information is largely descriptive; rather than analytical. I don't think this can be fully solved at the level of country authors. The editors should be aware of the overall policy issues and ensure the individual chapters address them. Improvement needs continuous interaction with country chapter authors.

Academics and practitioners are important, but not sufficient to influence policy. Academics are not favoured as advisors in government in many countries, so if you want to influence policy directly, you need engagement with some different people and institutions. Analytical work is much in demand. Academics working with policy analysts and policy makers has worked when tried in general and in DiRAP.

DiRAP is not 'intervening' in policy, which takes a process of engagement and different kinds of people – as a policy maker, I like it but I don't use it

Even practitioners often find too little of what they want, so turn elsewhere. Editors play a key function here. If possible, more of a small full-time working group could work well, particularly

if a dynamic online presence is intended. In this case, some of editors would need have different interests and skills.

Few decision makers surf the Net – online resources are used mainly by younger people, but also policy researchers and analysts. Analytical work is best when connected to policy processes – best practices are important, but they are no use unless contextualized in national policy making.

From the perspective of a telecomm and regulatory lawyer, policy makers want to know about ICT use and all its implications, as well as more purely connectivity matters - whether they are promoting or hindering more progressive policies. A single voice like DiRAP is important, where country views are shared and synthesized. A somewhat stronger template and more editorial input would improve this value.

I would take this time to touch a bit on influencing policy. It all depends on whether you are willing to go down the path of actually doing the influencing or stop at the level of making a publication and promoting it in the conventional albeit web-savvy way.

ICT4D is still much on regulated infrastructures – also of course on unregulated areas – usage / applications, services, innovation, openness and IP, Internet governance etc. It is a struggle bringing the latter to the former, but also the former to latter. Many assume that the underpinnings are there, but this is not the case in many countries. Points of intervention are different -- S&T Departments for example are supportive of ICT&D because they are used to blue sky thinking. So they provide free connectivity for research projects, where Communications Ministries and public enterprises have a license based view of the World. Trade and Industry may support small entrepreneurs in ICT, and at high level (President, Finance), the challenge is bringing these infrastructure and development viewpoints together – in alignment for effectiveness in country. Moving beyond infrastructure is a challenge – for people working on this, it's hard to hit all the nails on the head. Each area has different intervention points and skill sets – from access to scientific knowledge to knowledge of best practice in regulating interconnection. You definitely have to map the areas to focus on – if the stretch too wide, you can miss addressing any very well.

My general comment on the DiRAP publication is that it helps me (and I'm sure the other decision makers as well) to scan the status of ICT development and utilization in the AP region. I often use the data and information contained in the book as references to various papers and presentations I make. So, I think the publication is beneficial to both the government and practitioners. However, the date of the manuscript writing and the publication itself is about 1-2 years lag, so that some data have changed in the field.

Review is needed of policy and regulation after global crisis – both breakdown in regulation and still-monopolized / over-regulated markets – the state of ICT markets.

What is the target audience? If policy makers and implementers, it isn't providing what they need. Even the title is somewhat confusing given DiRAP's good focus on knowledge, transformation and people more than technology, to the credit of Orbicom and others. But it is still too descriptive and not very analytical, let alone normative or visionary in terms of transformational processes.

To influence public policy and policy discourse with research results meaningfully, you need to do a follow-on activity that is knowledge intensive (ideally for each country or for selected

countries based on interest and potential impact. The activity requires an understanding of respective national ICT strategies and aspirations (including the gaps therein based on a comprehensive understanding of ICT4D vis-a-vis knowledge/info society parameters). It also requires some intelligence work that identifies a small network of people across sectors who can influence or mobilize national machineries. There is an intervention that is done with this network of people and the outcome is that the research results are featured and debated in "key" (respected and legitimate) public fora with the requisite stakeholder participation. If things go well, you won't have to pay for the fora - it takes care of itself. Partnerships with "key" entities in the countries will be key, otherwise it won't work.

I find DiRAP too subjective. It needs more facts and evidence that policy makers can't hide from. Orbicom's Digital Divide project was very good in this respect. It is important to continue to at least collate/synthesize and compare data of all kinds – usage indicators, policy ratings etc.

While the intervention is aimed at a multistakeholder group, most of the influencing work will focus on the public sector because you can't scale effectively without government involvement; in some countries (if not most countries), government leads the development process; knowledge and solutions have a hard time penetrating bureaucracies, yet that is what they desperately need; successful policy intervention would release public resources for implementation, which can be tapped by stakeholders in the other sectors; and some policies require changes in legal and regulatory frameworks.

d. Structure / Format / Content

Value of the current structure/format/content of DirAP with each of these market segments, and suggestions for future DirAP production and publication

Author's note: Structure, format and content have changed over fur editions (and the precursor PAN Yearbooks). The revamped website makes it easy to trace changes; evolution of headings in country chapters, development of regional and thematic chapters and, for the new edition, sub-regional overviews and five chapters on education.

2009-10 Content

Country Chapters (30)

Infrastructure, institutions, industries, legal and regulatory environment, digital content, online services, ICT-related educational and capacity building, open source and content, ICT R&D, challenges and opportunities – boxes (1-2) special country issues/events..

Regional overviews

- *ICT for development in Asia Pacific: Emerging themes in a diverse region*
- *An overview of regulatory approaches to ICTs in Asia and best practices for the future*
- *Managing innovation in the network economy: Lessons for countries in the AP region*

B. Regional issues in ICT in education

- *Education for All in the digital age*
- *Distance education in Asia Pacific*
- *ICTs in non-formal education in Asia Pacific*
- *Capacity-building for ICT integration in education*
- *Public-private partnerships in ICT for education*
- *Pacific Island Countries*

- *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation*
- *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*
- *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation*

Data and indicators

On data, ITU and others go to governments and regulators; data is often wrong, sometimes badly. DiRAP can provide a valuable service of reviewing and improving data country by country. Starting a cycle with some common base is probably a good idea. Someone or group could do a synthesis of available sources, which authors could then use or replace.

I would urge a better quantitative data core for evenness, trust and comparability. But there is also great value in country and regional perspectives which is not avail elsewhere. I consult DiRAP a few times a month in my research and policy work.

Data is one of most difficult parts – the proprietary data is hard to get and what's there is aimed at promoting some view or other. Developing good data is half the work - but worth doing!

For the PAN Yearbooks – a few consultants did data work on status of connectivity. Doing this kind of thing at the start of a cycle, or fairly continuously, would make sense. Country author teams could examine data and bring out the best. Updating data regularly and making it available online would be valuable to many users and potential users.

The content lacks scientific rigor. We got ITU data for first 2 editions, but authors were not happy as they have their own government and other sources of data. As a result, some chapters had no relation to the data. I still think it's best to have common databases or references before chapters are written, and ask authors to use and improve it. DiRAP should preserve the freedom of focus in different countries, but cover enough of the basics to be more solid and credible.

There's nothing like the Sciadas piece – common datasets – this is missing in the Digital Review of the LAC region.

Chapters

Countries are given almost equal weighting. For example, the length of the India chapter is the same as that of Maldives. This makes the small country chapters artificially long (with much unnecessary information) while large country/economy chapters provide only superficial insight. I do not suggest the chapter lengths should be proportionate to populations, but the equal weighting does not make sense. Covering small economies is good, but not at the cost of limited information on large ones.

Uniformity of chapters is OK – some 'big' countries dominate everywhere, and this redresses the imbalance a little. Political space issues (Burma being praised and Malaysia criticized in an issue) are not avoidable. For all but the entirely unacquainted parts of the audience, examples like this actually speak volumes.

Comparisons are always inter-country. Comparisons should be made among countries of a feather (no point comparing PNG with Singapore). Why not group countries and do regional comparisons?

The same information from previous versions is repeated in most of the chapters. This is not necessary in a periodic publication - all we need is what happened during the last two years. This happens when the authors change. It is useful to have the same authors on a long term basis, but also important that there be change and transition.

Themes may be more interesting than countries, and there can be an evolution over time.

Don't give up the chapters on all countries - they are a unique strength of DiRAP.

Having all countries is important, even if uneven, but country and editorial teams then need do analysis, interpretation and cross-country analysis wherever appropriate – not comparing India and Maldives – comparing like countries and sub-regions

Asia has mind boggling diversity. It may make more sense to do comparisons in 5 or so groups.

A stronger template would improve comparability. What about 4-5 categories of themes? Country authors could address these - about 2/3, descriptive and some data, 1/3 synthesis – what this means for people.

More evenness requires more editorial support – for some parts, there is no other way.

It would be better to have more of a template for authors, the diversity is so large. Maybe this has been addressed in the 2009-10 edition.

The book could use a tighter edit plan, not big changes, country chapters are central and interesting but uneven. Political environments are part of the reason, and the thematic chapters reduce this problem by enabling 'outside' comparison, and themes were developing anyway to capture major developments and trends.

The regional leaders – localization, education etc – are very good and interesting. The Sciadas data is also good, and covering all countries.

The DiRAP editors have made a good attempt to address this problem in the next edition, by including for the first time a chapter exclusively on distance education. This will help readers to learn of numerous formal ICT initiatives that DiRAP did not report previously because they didn't fall under the non-formal education heading. Non-formal and formal projects should be considered together in the book and in general; this is not just an academic distinction but one which would permit a more unified political-economy case for educational ICT-based projects than is currently the case.

Authors

Much is made of the network of authors. It is difficult to make changes due to continuity and loyalty factors, and arguments about some people being in good positions of policy making and influence, but DiRAP is not getting good current information from up to 10 authors, some being recycled from earlier editions. A competitive process might work, as there is prestige in publishing in DiRAP. One could imagine sets of outputs, one by selected authors, one by competition, one by PhDs and post docs etc

A more consistent selection of authors is important, ones who will coordinate the country team, integrate data, interpret or relate information to what is going on in the country (and region and world).

Some chapters are very good, digital media in India for example. This specialized kind of treatment is good if the data side is done well. Trust also means knowing about authors; brief biographies could be there. Some are known, some very junior – this limits trust, but serves capability development.

ICT&D Focus

ICT&D is really country-to-global. Regional perspectives and issues are mostly also global perspectives and issues. Little is purely regional, but there is some, and that is important.

It is valuable to have a focus on the bottom countries and people, even the VERY bottom, because others don't. But you have to do this within the big picture, so a bottom of the pyramid focus doesn't let you off the hook to capture the big picture.

Focus on the weaker countries and poorer in research is a strong characteristic of DiRAP; it is normative in this sense, and in promoting openness, equity, inclusion. It is an advantage that specific needs can be accommodated, e.g. focusing on Telecenters in the Pacific Islands, or on citizen journalism somewhere else.

The changes in IDRC make me think of what DiRAP is covering in the “whole ICT” picture (if such exists). Innovation, human development, econ and social policy are there but not prominent. It is challenging where draw the line, if at all.

The potential for wifi would be a good DiRAP piece – agency, people can manage wifi networks that also grow into the commercial sector. Yunus is right in focus on the poor and poorest – different forms of entrepreneurship are needed here.

IDRC's ICT4D/IPS cross-fertilization could be excellent – a supporting environment for knowledge society and economy development – policy/regulatory work should continue and perhaps spread as far as areas like energy, climate change, carbon and environment. DiRAP's IP focus works well with openness orientation of IDRC and all its program areas, including social and economic policy. Recession breeds innovation/investment, a time to build.

More economic analysis would be useful within and across chapters, supported by data. You would need the initiative and skills somewhere in the editorial board.

Some of the ICT infrastructure initiatives have a strong interest in science and innovation – e.g. RIA, LIRNEAsia and DIRSI – but these have resisted going heavily into such areas because of resources, the need to keep focus, and economic policy orientation.

Style, Approach

In the 2nd edition, authors were asked to be more evaluative. This was good, but being critical is hard or impossible in some countries. A thematic approach might be better, but country 'best and worst practice' cases are good.

References and synthesis can be valuable services for several audiences. Synergies are key today. It's a lot easier to do this kind of service online, as references can clutter a book.

DiRAP is quite descriptive, compared say to UNDP best practice pieces. Short policy notes are just tip of iceberg, but delve into the policy specifics, benefits and costs in education or health or mobile payments systems.

Keep as much as possible the multiplicity of voices and the networking. Emphasize the thematic issues more if you want to move more boldly into policy discussion.

I would like to see more comparative analysis by country authors and in the thematic chapters.

You really need abstracts; it is hard to find your way into so many articles.

SMS-banking and finance is an excellent example of a BoP and even BaP (base of the pyramid) theme.

The intention of getting more professionals involved in the systematic build-up of data and information regarding the ICT experiences in the region to a point where such data are put together into useful cohesive information as bases for decision making has began a process of realization among these professionals that they do hold a significant position in making sense out of the rather chaotic manner in which data exist in the region. The governments of the region are, I believe, beginning to realize the significance of this effort. Hence, it should be continued.

Strengthen the strengths and broaden the scope into a global and 'whole ICT' review.

e. e-Publication and Online Presence

On e-publication and wiki, I guess a lot of those writing these days want instant online access to materials. On the other hand, hard copy may have more impact if almost everyone else is moving away from hard copy. Naturally a combination of online and hard copy is best.

My experience with wikis is they only work if you've got a good editor and people who are paid to create them. Unpaid crowd-sourcing approaches really don't work.

Wiki - Interesting idea, but is not necessarily practical. For any wiki publication to be successful the number of contributors has to be large (and of course dynamic!). Then only, the individual biases are balanced and a standard outcome can be expected. For example, even in Wikipedia the most successful articles are the joint work of many. Given the relatively fewer number of ICT4D researchers in Asia, it would be difficult to think we have the right critical mass for such an effort.

The 2007-08 edition was really available only on the IDRC website. The DiRAP website has just been revamped – better late than never – and there are many possibilities for its development and use. Basecamp is a valuable asset.

Online updates were tried but really didn't work. Authors were offered \$50 per update, but only a few were done. Ideas like Q&A, chats on website etc didn't take off.

UNAPDIP did wiki-type activities, e.g. with e-Notes. Authors had the first shot, then everyone. There was very little uptake. Unpaid crowd sourcing approaches indeed don't work – you need a dedicated and resourced group of people. LIRNEAsia does the website activities well.

One approach would be to test the expansion of online activity, for example with one person posting materials. But that might be too under-resourced to succeed. You probably need a small but able group, maybe specialists in sub-regions or themes. Whether this is the same group as for the book is important. It could work either way, but the two functions are quite different.

Fellowship awards for PhD students could be valuable, in terms of online publication and for some an invitation to network events.

Other product lines or online activities can include debate series, training services and partnerships. Training courses and outlines are used, links to good information on training and fellowship funding is of GREAT INTEREST in countries. What about a partnership with the IEEE GAP committee, representing hundreds of thousands of engineers, many interested in 'engineers without borders' approaches to helping build wifi systems in poor places.

To realize its potential, DiRAP must be online. Today, without this, you are very limited. The book really should be optional, if it's a good strong output of the process.

The book and web have tremendous synergies for all objectives. But in the end, you can do the web without the book but not succeed with the book without the web.

Authors should be involved throughout. Now, they draft, re-draft after editorial board input, then are essentially out. The field is dynamic, some areas change quickly (though some don't). A dynamic public online presence would allow ongoing author involvement and vice versa.

I think you have to de-link the publication and the website activity. They overlap, but are quite different processes. Interaction is needed but intermixture probably undermines both.

The editorial team has to be selected on the basis of the objectives. This is a better approach than trying to decide if the same or different people are needed for the book and the online activity.

I assembled a book like this years ago. We offered \$5000 for updates and had no uptake. We did a series of working paper updates with a small group.

DiRAP should be looking again at electronic tools and applications/services, in spite of varying capabilities among countries, but does not have much savvy in this. There is currently no place and resources for it in the DiRAP. Earlier attempts were not positive in getting updates done; deadlines are hard to ensure, new ways of engaging support for inputs need to be figured out.

For ongoing website activity, you need a small high-end group to engage people in meaning and policy discussion – practically oriented – some of DiRAP's competitors do this well.

For this you would need the editorial team on call all the time. Some authors would not be comfortable posting material without it being edited, some would. Without continual editing, you would in effect have 2 different sets of authors.

You need a good website that raises interaction among ICT4D and related interests. At a minimum, you would have to reconfigure or add to the editorial group to manage data, information, blogs and discussion – to look for country content/comment of many kinds and distill it for presentation.

It is hard to do the LIRNEAsia approach, feed policy debate, and particularly to do this on the broad range of ICT&D issues DiRAP covers. Perhaps possible, maybe with a small regional team separate or partly separate from the authors

IDRC supports ICT, innovation and related policy research and discussion in each region and globally. There is more synergy among these initiatives than there is interaction. Strength in numbers. IDRC even has an advisory group they gather together every few years at Harvard.

It is probably necessary to do online activity as an underlying process for books and publications – value added is hard to raise otherwise. There are many services and sources of value to users that require the online presence for timeliness, breadth of communication and users, supply or input from research/stakeholder groups etc.

Mentoring might be done more and better by doing some of it online, focusing on weaker countries. The processes could probably be changed with better mentoring results and about the same workloads.

DiRAP should not try to be journalistic, there's lots of hot items and current issues. Synthesis and interpretation of meaning for countries and the region are key – development implications are not addressed by most initiatives. Asking serious questions is a value of DiRAP and relating ICT to other major development initiatives and events, whether MDGs, global warming or global recession.

It's NOT 'if you build it, they will come.' Given earlier attempts, I fear the online part would undermine book production and sales.

Online, you could do quantitative and other updates, some frequent, some periodic. It would be possible to inform policy discussion through the underlying policy processes.

Online activity can be a different world - from journalism to policy research. I suggest focusing on what to do initially, and test the results. Website usage statistics can reveal a lot if analyzed with some care; this should be done now with the IDRC site, and started with the new DiRAP sites. In future, with more online activities, moderating and managing forums needs some different skills than producing the book.

Online discussion of chapters, updates and new articles are a good idea. Basecamp is potentially valuable for online activity.

Because DiRAP is out of date by the time it is published, online updates were tried. I did the updating for my country and was happy to. We need a different approach, or to find authors who will update. The incentive to me is to publish, not the funds. The fee is welcome encouragement, but not a major issue.

The pre-publication time is too long, it really has to be online. You could provide online access free with purchase of a book, but the value I think is in being free to most or all audiences.

Print and online versions are very good complements, much more than the sum of the parts if both can be done. Online activity fills weaknesses, solves problems and increases use potential by a lot.

You shouldn't separate the web content and the back end; it has to be Orbicom. The executive and editorial management go together.

Test demand – get online aimed at students, journalists, analysts, academics – measure usage as best you can – develop additional services in education, training, policy debate on countries and overview issues

The current editorial board has many of the abilities to do an online presence, but is oriented to the print process, advisory more than anything else. Some have been chosen for their expertise in digital publishing, but these plans haven't gone as intended. The nature of the production process is fairly different. You would need a constantly working group, and a smaller group for the online activity

If it's the same group doing updates, I suggest discussing commitments – 5 or 10 per year. The editor in chief or editorial board can suggest topics routinely, as they have at times in past. Updates should be quickly (1-2 weeks) and posted. We could test how this works and test the market. Many authors are hesitant writers, but could probably develop ownership and most are willing. DiRAP is an important as place to publish for some.

A Wiki approach depends on waxing and waning energies of the community – a) expectation not too high and b) opportunity for people to participate is as important as numbers. We could explore with Basecamp with the present group and expand participation to end users – without charging for usage. We could get some input free or very low-cost, maybe a lot.

The editorial board, when introduced, was all excited. Now it lacks enthusiasm, also for mentoring; it needs new life.

f. Capacity and Network Development

Contribution of DirAP in developing ICT&D partners' local capacity in researching, collecting, analyzing, forecasting and writing about ICT&D issues

Capacity development has been an important objective, but many of the authors are senior. Some mentoring is done, and the networking is valuable. Many research relationships and even some public-private partnerships have arisen from the relationships fostered.

The value of the network may be as great as the value of the publication. The network has been built up with a lot of investment and is a valuable asset if it can be well used.

The PAN Yearbooks and DiRAP editions have contributed to field building in ICT&D in Asia. Field building doesn't end, but it gets more complex, and there are many more actors. One possibility would be to declare victory and move on to something else. What are the next stages of field building?

Another compelling reason for doing this type of intervention is that the countries concerned tend to already have an ICT strategy, but some are lacking the knowledge of what to do next and how to adapt to arising challenges, especially with portfolio rotational turnover and "generational" transitions in the civil service.

Capacity development is in part confidence boosting from the development of networks. There are other resources in the region, but few which support this approach. It is a difficult approach, asking and assisting weaker countries and authors to participate equally in a high end publication.

Many of the younger scholars were able to chat with the ASEAN Secretary General and with noted scholars; it was clear that this meant a lot to them.

The networking is as important as the peer review and mentoring. All kinds of partnerships have resulted, some PPP, but mostly research interaction and collaboration. There is a definite value here, which should be possible to increase.

Linking researchers, sharing of experience and related capacity development very important, specially for weaker partners, but also for everyone. Research and project collaboration become possible for researchers otherwise quite isolated. There are even foreign relations aspects, on sensitive issues if DiRAP consistently pushes for better policy and practice.

Local partners vary in ability, hence capacity and network building. The 'state of art' is a wonderful goal but, but a different idea – more commercial. The editorial board has done some mentoring of weaker authors, providing extensive comments and seeing great improvements. A few authors have been hired by national and international organizations not long after writing DiRAP chapters.

There is a need for more editors in Asia who will commit time to the editing job – there is no lack of publishers or outlets, but they don't provide editors. DiRAP's investment in the editorial group has been important.

Localization and local content are very important aspects of capacity building, and both PAN and DiRAP have been prominent in both.

An annual meeting is appealing for many reasons including capacity development, but the group is big – 40 chapters and double that number of authors. Many networks have competitive processes and bring the best (peer reviewed) younger authors to annual events. This is a different idea than DiRAP, but DiRAP could use competitive processes for some of its online activities, and have an added dimension of capacity development in the process.

The network is of greatest value to the weaker partners, their capacity development, confidence to speak, opportunities to publish – all could perhaps be enhanced by online activity. Some of the mentoring can be online, in closed spaces, similarly review of a wider array of papers, comments, suggesting of topics by the editor in chief and editorial board. Beyond that, a portion of the online activity can be open for different kinds of posting and discussion – peer reviewed screened, or quite open (the crowd-sourced part).

Preserve the network aspect. Connections and sharing of perceptions across the region are very easy to undervalue.

Some real region ‘binding’ has been going on, and DiRAP has had a part in that.

The effort to organize a cohesive group of expert editors in the field of ICT, particularly in relation to the interests of the Asia Pacific Region, has been a fantastic idea, and such a group could certainly become more influential in the region.

Face to face meeting is needed; periodic meetings are very efficient. Ongoing transition of authors is good; some competitive mechanisms might help.

g. Organizing Structures and Sustainability

Sustainable organizing structures for the production of DirAP: Board members, editor, associate editor, authoring partnerships, remuneration, board meetings and author meetings

Approximate cost per edition (2-year cycle, based on 2009-10 edition costs)

• Orbicom (project leader and project coordinator)	64,000
• Authors C\$1,000 for each country chapter and C\$3,000, to each thematic chapter	68,000
• Editor-in-chief	30,000
• Associate editor	20,000
• Editorial board members (4, 2 years)	16,000
• Printing	25,000
• Printing and mailing promotional materials, advertising	8,000
• <u>Author’s meeting</u>	<u>70,000</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>301,000</u>

DiRAP is a very large undertaking, with about 40 chapters, deadlines missed, editorial input and revising – by the end, everyone is exhausted.

DiRAP is probably not sustainable on a benefit-cost in its present form. Should it be? It is very much on the ‘public goods’ side of ICT&D information provision.

There must be ways of using available people resources better – practitioners, academics, PhD students and post-docs, experienced / retired scholars and others. The network and project design has to find them and draw them in. Competitive processes are appropriate for some but not others. Established academics may have reason to devote time and input if ICT&D research is a main interest anyway. For others, the reward may be publishing or networking opportunities. For established practitioners and policy people, time is often scarce, but small amounts of important time often available. Also, different product lines need different kinds of people.

Partnerships need to be considered too. DiRAP runs on IDRC funding and free (human) resources. DiRLAC has EU funding and a good regional organization in ECLAC. ECLAC was pushed and helped at the start, but delivered. ESCAP is different but active. DiRAP is more ‘non-profit’ than official or private, but there must be regional and international organizations with potentially good partnership possibilities.

Basecamp is a good platform. Could it be used more for production of DiRAP and for mentoring? Could there be a broader Basecamp for some purposes?

The Editorial Board was a needed innovation, which has to be a working board, otherwise it's—another decision level and too hard on the Editor-in-chief. IDRC has been an excellent partner; UNDP is more politically handcuffed, but Shahid has been brave.

Editorial Board was a great idea given the nature of the book, but it was difficult to right away organize a cohesive working group out of highly successful professionals in their respective cultural milieus, working as a team for the first time to produce a major book, especially when the book deals with a subject as broad as ICT in the Asia Pacific Region - which may be considered very complicated given the various backgrounds and concerns of the different governments. Each person has his/her own concerns and interests about the subject matter and how to go about the whole project.

IDRC has been a good partner on the Editorial Board as well their funding.

There are some issues with IDRC on the Editorial Board. Some donors participate in projects, others don't. Their presence changes the nature of the relationships so that the process is not fully democratic and neutral. On the positive side, the IDRC members have not imposed their views, have given continuity, and have been strong contributors of ideas.

IDRC has been supporting all the ingredients of ICT4D, innovation and related agendas – e.g. in RIA, DIRSI, LIRNEasia, DiRAP, DiRLAC, WDR and LIRNE.NET. These networks have a lot of potential, including in working more together; their goals and even focal areas are not as different as they first appear.

If DiRAP is to be sustainable on an ongoing basis, it needs people who have a role doing this kind of work with or without DiRAP. I was involved in a similar initiative mainly based on PhD students in 22 universities. They surfed, researched and collated information in a structured way, building up a robust repository over 4 years.

In the Editorial Board, we spent quite a bit of time debating. It would have been good if differences were quickly resolved as we progressed with the work, but this process remained slower than we had wanted it because it was part of the learning process, of the gelling of a team.

Re partners, regional regulatory-focused bodies meet, but are unlikely funding sources. The Asia Pacific Telecommunity may be worth looking into – mainly companies and telecomms including international ones, less recession-hit than most sectors, and APT more is interested in ICT usage and impacts than before.

On partnerships, UNDP – had 'them or us' problems; having one partner is difficult. UNESCO did 2 chapters, but once written, they were mostly about UNESCO activities. Orbicom had many partners in Digital Divide project. This seems to work if objectives are clear and there are defined roles for everyone – not slugging it out issue by issue.

Partnerships are better with the NGO sector than the UN because of its dynamism and non-bureaucratic behavior. What about APC? AMIC is trying to get back into the picture, and looking for a new Secretary General.

The present cost is about \$250,000 per edition. It's a big production process that needs to be made easier, somehow. I think benefits exceed costs if you include capacity development and network benefits. I don't think it can continue just as a reference, specially without improvements in data, analysis and timeliness. I think it can do better with the same resources, now that it is established, or do much better with some more resources. A regional base would be good, but hasn't really been found yet.

Remuneration is sometimes an issue, for some individuals and some activities. Many Asians are sensitive about raising money issues, and they don't matter to most people. To be sustainable, DiRAP needs to be run mostly by people who benefit in other ways than remuneration.

Sustainability is not possible on sales, so we need to find some combination of low-cost inputs and different funding streams. Partnerships and pooling may be necessary.

There have been various partnerships – UNESCO, APC, UNDP-APDIP which is still there. There was a review of partnership possibilities in 2007, but partners with similar approaches and audiences were not found.

What about an Orbicom Chair in each country? This would provide another important part of the network, participating at DiRAP meetings, and some contributing as editors or in other ways.

h. Marketing and Reach

Publishing / marketing strategies of DirAP (sales, visibility, etc.)

A lot more could be done. The website has been poor until now. Sage has its 6 months embargo, and in terms of publicity, marketing and distribution, neither Southbound nor Orbicom nor Sage have been highly motivated.

I have published with Sage. It doesn't mean more sales, but they definitely give visibility; they are good at 'name dropping.' That could account for some of the visibility on the Internet. At the same time, they are not really committed to one commercial product more than others. Southbound had more commitment, and maybe everyone assumes Sage has this too.

Sage India doesn't give as much reach as Sage California or London. They get the message, but do NOT have the same following and take up.

The publisher presents problems with an open access philosophy, which IDRC and others have. It's not worthwhile unless sales are good or reach in the target audiences is high. Even then, the price high in delay and 'un-openness.'

Sage isn't really interested in publishing. They are more a printer than a co-publisher, so the only value is if the sales and reach are good.

My experience, and I can give you many examples, is that books most benefit publishers and (US) university libraries.

Having the author meeting and policy/dissemination conference together could work well. We could have meetings around region, not always in Singapore. The publisher can do more, getting reviews into prominent places.

An annual or regular (1.5-2 years) meeting of authors could be combined with a launch or promotion event and connected with an ICT forum or policy event in the region. Annual meetings are easiest to make expected and prominent.

I don't think the 6-month lag is a problem.

The publication lag is a problem for people really on top of their game, but DiRAP may be more for institutions and libraries.

For the book, the relatively long production cycle isn't avoidable for reasons of editorial input and content quality. Sage has done better than before on sales and reach, even if sales are still fairly low.

There is a disconnect with audiences for most knowledge providers. Surveys help, but I don't think DiRAP does this. What you really want to know is how users are using the material, what they do with it, the outcomes ultimately if you can detect them – in policy, corporate activity, research etc. ICT academics tend to know how to understand audiences and usage, but most information producers tend not to.

Institutions, libraries and other stakeholders should get more complementary copies. I don't have any to distribute in my country. I don't think sales bring in much money, so we should at least get the editions out more widely.

More could be done on distribution for courses, promoting DiRAP as a text and as required reading.

I should have heard about this; the publicizing must be weak. Citations must be low too, or I would have encountered it. Following your message, I found it on IDRC site; the DiRAP site was blocked to me, and there was a warning about malware.

IDRC seems shy about 'selling' – the authors would love more, including more copies to distribute.

More should be spent on publicity and the new website.

5. Analysis and Options

This section is more brief than it may be in the end. As mentioned above, findings will be interpreted in different ways by different people, and discussion within DiRAP more important than one person's interpretations. At this stage, I will try to organize the findings somewhat better than above, provide my own set of interpretations for purposes of inviting discussion. I will try to keep these two things separate or distinct.

It's usually a good idea to build up to options, but in this case the information strikes me as more easily organized in terms of a few options suggested by people interviewed, and by an initial look at competition and usage. This is in many ways a range of options from less to more online activity, as one starting point, and there are certainly other ways of organizing the findings.

1. Declare victory and move on;
2. Continue on the same model with ongoing refinement;
3. Same model (book focus), active website for book production and capacity building;
4. Active website for dissemination and engagement as well as for production;
5. Online activity, book production optional, partnership orientation.

1. Declare victory and move on

The person who contributed this 'line' did not mean it ironically. The PAN Yearbooks and DiRAP editions have been part of field building in a period of very rapid ICT development. Much has been contributed in 'knowledge building' and 'region binding.' The field is now relatively flourishing, there is good competition, and not all initiatives are meant to be 'sustainable.' In fact, very few donor supported initiatives of this kind are sustained beyond 10-15 years – long-lived multi-donor organizations like the African Economic Research Consortium being exceptions that prove the rule. Initiatives similar to DiRAP have also devolved and evolved in different forms, from becoming viable NGOs, to being subsumed into another organization. Capacities developed – skills, confidence, relationships/network – always get used.

But a problem with this option, to an economist, is that to the extent that audiences are being reached and 'informed public discourse' supported, an additional set of benefits needs to be counted, and discontinuation interrupts these.

Overall objective (current/ending funding phase 2005-2009): To generate new knowledge and literature about the ICT4D state-of-practice in the Asia-Pacific region and provide in-depth analyses and syntheses of ICT policy, technology development and application, issues and debates and the significance of ICT deployment for national and regional socio-development. DiRAP aims to disseminate to a global audience.

Feedback rates DiRAP as not used enough and not been strong in its efforts to connect with its target audiences. But does appear to be the subject of a lot of online discussion. This needs more investigation, but supports the approach, underlines the importance of online availability, and suggests possibilities for doing more with the resources and capacity available – fine tuning at the least, metamorphosis at the most.

2. Continue on the same model with ongoing refinement

The fourth edition is about to come out; the audiences will decide, but the book is a step forward in many respects in DiRAP's evolution, and some suggestions recur in the feedback from interviews for increasing utilization by policy makers and analysts, policy stakeholder groups, private sector, practitioners and experts, academics and researchers, students..

- Respondents within and outside DiRAP strongly advise good monitoring of usage, using the good available website tools, as soon as the 2009-10 edition comes online; also monitoring book sales and online references, and adjusting dissemination and other activities accordingly (more below);
- Data. Many people emphasized the importance of 'providing good data services,' particularly for policy analysts, practitioners, experts, academics. The 'Tale of Two Asias' chapter was appreciated by many, and seen as a minimum. The current edition has new strengths in thematic chapters, but not (even) this kind of data synthesis. Several suggested doing a data synthesis early in the book production cycle, and this could redress the gap in the 2009-10 edition if done and put online early in the next (2011-12?) cycle. Authors could both reference and improve upon country data - another valuable data service.
- Content. Some further focus on innovation, and on the 'bottom of the pyramid' were frequent suggestions. Monitoring of usage should advise the choice and contents of thematic chapters in particular. Several respondents see equal-length country chapters as very odd, accept that the book format may impose this kind of constraint, and suggest that complementary online activity could make diversity much easier.
- Approach. Recognizing unevenness problems, feedback suggests finding ways of inserting more analysis of trends and their implications for people, and more analysis of policy environments and policies than is now done in introductory and thematic chapters. The Sub-Regional Perspectives section (2009-10), for example, might compare like-groups of countries more than focusing on institutional and geographic groupings. Many of the country chapters could be more analytical and policy oriented in terms of trends. Synthesis of available data and analysis is also a valued analytical service.
- Organization and structure. To achieve the above, more consistent selection and transition of authors was suggested by many – also more frequent communication (about themes, data etc) during production. The role and importance of the editor in chief was underlined; a matter to be decided very early in the coming production cycle.
- Marketing and reach. More effort and resources for outreach was generally recommended, with usage monitoring helping to guide on most effective events, activities and materials. The suggestion of combining an author's meeting with a policy and dissemination event came up with several variations, including attachment to a regular DiRAP meeting and/or a regional ICT event – basically more careful use of the cycle for dialogue, publicity and mentoring. Book sales are seen by experienced knowledge producers as quite insignificant beside the visibility a publisher can provide.

3. Same model (book focus), active website for book production and capacity building

This approach would basically do everything in 2. above, and would add a more active website for the production of the book and some of the capacity development activities. The revamped website and discussion groups – Editorial Board, Basecamp (currently all authors) are a step in that direction (as well as being central for dissemination), and could be used for example for:

- development of a core of data on usage indicators, policy indicators, outcome indicators and evidence;
- discussing usage, updating themes and trends during Report drafting and editing;
- detailed editing and more/efficient mentoring of weaker authors/countries;
- identifying dissemination opportunities, developing dissemination plans and materials;
- maintaining network cohesion between meetings and Report releases.

These seem like very natural extensions from DiRAP's recent improvements in online activity. This kind of operation would probably need project manager, editor-in-chief, editorial board (or part) and website manager working together on a week-to-week basis with minimum friction and 'specialization, but synergy.' This is a lot to ask, and may underline some interview feedback advising clear new objectives for the next steps and selection of E.B. members and authors accordingly. Four years (two book cycles) may be long these days between substantial realignment of objectives and activities; a shorter next funding phase might be appropriate, and ongoing monitoring (usage, capacity) and program tuning would be important.

4. Active website for dissemination and engagement as well as for production

Almost everyone consulted said 'do this.' Reasons vary, but central are:

- the added ability "to generate new knowledge and literature about the ICT4D state-of-practice in the Asia-Pacific region and provide in-depth analyses and syntheses of ICT policy, technology development and application, issues and debates.." - both by assembling and disseminating knowledge more regularly and by engaging to some extent with target audiences – i.e. increasing audience size, interest and benefits/outcomes *beyond* what occurs from simply putting the book online;
- the suggestion that there are many complementarities between print and (several) online activities – each can improve the other – so the whole can be considerably greater than the sum of the parts. For example, online generation of knowledge eases constraints of format, evenness and timeliness inherent in the book cycle, while the book and publishing provide a unique product, and some visibility and discussion around it.

This option is also a fairly natural extension of an active website and an operation that monitors usage and uses the website for production – the previous option. All of the supply uses of the website - just listed in 3 above – also have demand-side benefits if they are done and shared (in part) openly online – posting data updates, having thematic discussions, highlighting issues and events, etc.

A decision, in this approach, is whether to also have interaction with users through one or more blogs or discussion spaces, in addition to posting materials and just monitoring discussion on the DiRAP website and on the Internet. Feedback from several experienced people indicates that:

- it is important to usage to have some facility for interaction on the website;
- format and style depend on audiences and objectives; ‘good’ use is important while broad participation is less likely and less important;
- like the content production activities, website interaction needs to be well fed, moderated and managed;
- user input and review can generate strong research and content quality benefits.

Open source research' on ICTs in Asia - Rohan Samarajiva, DiRAP 2007-08, p. 301.

Speed and accuracy are critical in policy-relevant research necessary to remove constraints affecting ICTs. One solution, adopted by LIRNEasia, is open-source research. The Colombo-based regional organization does not claim to know all of the answers. Its researchers work with multiple drafts that are published on the Web. In some cases—such as a national early warning system for Sri Lanka in the months following the tsunami—they went further, holding expert forums and public meetings and using the mass media to draw attention to the online drafts. The end result of this online and offline feedback is extensive revision of initial drafts.

LIRNEasia says open source research converts readers into reviewers and helps improve the quality of the final product. A by-product is the faster and easier acceptance of research findings and recommendations by regulators, policymakers and other key stakeholders.

'Open source research is not the norm in universities, where peer review is the defining characteristic,' says Rohan Samarajiva, Executive Director of LIRNEasia. 'But it [the peer review system] has come to serve as a break on the early release of ideas, lest they be thought of as half-baked. But in the new Internet-mediated world open source is a better model for research.'

For LIRNEasia, the circle of people interested in a given research effort or set of ideas are the true peers who will donate their time and effort to refine the work in progress. Some blog threads on the LIRNEasia website have received over 50 useful, substantive comments. 'If the author is willing to revise and revise again, the end result will be superior in quality and will be produced in a shorter time.'

Option 4 is in many ways a natural extension of 3, and one could start with 3 as well as jump directly to 4. HOWEVER, this is now quite a different model than the current DiRAP and may need quite different organization in some respects. Following are some more specific suggestions and issues raised in the interviews:

Very experienced respondents said it isn't possible to cover the whole range of audiences and issues in ICT&D well, *in the online activity* – from debate on policy/law to popular journalism, and particularly in the ‘whole ICT’ sense of technologies and communications as parts of social, economic, political, cultural and ethical processes, capabilities and freedoms. It is important though to keep the ‘big picture’ in view while focusing in terms of audience and issue.

This presents some challenges to DiRAP in pursuing this option. One is to decide whether both book and online activity should be more focused. With the present model and authors, the book

is quite widely dispersed across the ICT&D terrain, compared for example to be primarily focused on policy and regulation (e.g. LIRNE networks), or on economic and social policy and analysis, or on innovation and human development.

This kind of *online* operation has to be managed particularly well and proactively – ‘crowd-sourcing wikis don’t work.’ Again this probably means a (small) core day-day working group oriented to the website and public interface. It probably needs a somewhat different editorial board, and a network where many are willing to contribute at least small amounts of private and/or public input.

A second high-level challenge is thus deciding how much and in what ways the book and website operations are integrated and separate in terms of people, organizational structure and management. Respondents differed. Integration appeals to some, particularly for capacity development reasons - keeping authors involved and the current network active. However, many said, and I would agree, that running a dynamic website is a different world requiring different skills and experience.

In short, you need a group that can specialize, work together and do both book and online ‘product lines.’ Good advice from a very experienced ICT publisher in Asia was to specify objectivities and activities first, then design the organization and select the people accordingly. The more ground to be covered in terms of areas and audiences, the more specialized human perspectives and resources are needed (e.g. legal, economic, political, innovation systems, cultural anthropology..).

As above, a main purpose of the online activity in this approach is to convey good information to (target) audiences – through a wide variety of ‘services’ – particularly data provision and assessment, knowledge assembly and synthesis, policy- and solution-based analysis. It is nevertheless useful and important to have appropriate forms of audience participation from the outset, particularly for review and quality purposes.

Some degree of competitiveness in some areas of content supply is seen as both healthy and possible by respondents. *Online* activity could include, for example, competitions aimed at young or unpublished scholars.

Logically, additional resources needed for the online activity can come from core-donors, other donors and partners, or open source co-production and low-cost labour in the network. Low-cost labour could come from groups in a position and with a motive to contribute – for example ICT-oriented academics and researchers, willing and retired experts, students, unpublished authors.

5. Online activity, book production optional, partnership orientation

This option just carries the online activity and services of 4. a bit further. Activities or services could include:

- debates involving prominent speakers and moderators;
- policy briefs and updates;
- a PhD and post-doc research information and publication window;
- training materials, curricula and information including funding sources and programs; issue and policy briefs;

- commentary on breaking news;
- partnership activity updates.

The book, if it continued to be produced and published, would be a periodic synthesis. Resource requirements would be higher and – depending on additional funders and/or partners - co-production and efficiency in the network would be more critical.

Partnership issues arise for all 5 options sketched here, but are probably both more likely as well as more needed with a very active online activity. Needed, because of the resource requirements of a larger and more diverse operation (unless there was a substantial) narrowing of issue and/or audience focus at the same time). Likely, because there is some good competition at regional and global levels, because DiRAP would be overlapping with more of this, and because other initiatives are also looking for at least co-production types of partnerships. Going in with the competition is a tried and true strategy in the private sector, and could be possible here. A few of DiRAP's competitors, for example are good at public website management where DiRAP has little current capacity in place.

What DiRAP offers, and who might be good partners, are questions discussed in most of the interviews. Feedback includes some opposing views, and some suggestions that look promising to me for consideration and possible action:

- UN ESCAP and ACPICT are worth another look given the experience with ECLAC in the Digital Review of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the recent changes in ESCAP leadership and orientation. Feedback and experience suggest that this might be more a 'handing over to' than an ongoing partnership, given the nature of inter-governmental institutions and the UN in particular, but in some circumstances, this could be a productive form of devolution, and would likely engage some of the Network for longer than a transition phase.
- IDRC funded initiatives, particularly a) LIRNE / WDR and b) LIRNEasia / CPRSouth are worth (separate) looks at possible co-production synergies and interests. Both are more focused on ICT policy and regulation, but also cover a range of ICT&D matters. LIRNE/WDR needs partners at this time, and is country/global rather than country/regional; complementarity may be possible. LIRNEasia and CPRSouth have a very different approach and leadership than DiRAP, but if done well, respondents saw their content and perspectives – while distinct – as quite complementary.
- IDRC also funds innovation knowledge networks and activities in Asia, and of the few I know, ICTs are one central and enabling dimension. Synergies would seem possible. IDRC's thinking on its support for ICT&D and Innovation will be important for DiRAP to be connected with over the next weeks and months.
- DiRAP is described as being near the 'public goods' end of the ICT&D spectrum, and more NGO in orientation than official or even academic. This suggests organizations like APC (Asia) and AMIC. The latter has at times been DiRAP's greatest critic, but like ESCAP is changing again.
- More specifically discussion might be productive with the Global Information Society Watch, a joint initiative of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (Hivos) and the Third World Institute (ITeM), funded by Ford Foundation. The 2008 edition has 38 country reports, but only 4

from Asia (Bangladesh, India, Korea, Pakistan – and 3 Central Asian Republics not covered by DiRAP).

- APT, the more private and telecomm confederation, appears more interested today than previously in ‘public good’ oriented research, though experience of others like LIRNEasia suggests that private sector engagement takes considerable credibility/trust and effort to develop and maintain.

Discussion

Similar assessments and situations suggest the importance of discussion of assessment findings and options by DiRAP, and it is intended that this draft be posted on Basecamp within a few days. As mentioned, different people will have different views and interpretations, and donor driven reconfigurations are too common. At the same time, given the changes going on in IDRC, currently the sole funder, it will be important to get as clear signals as possible from IDRC, as they will have a major bearing on the degree and nature of transition involved – in sourcing resources, in approach and in possible partnerships.

With some interim discussion, the planning sessions in Penang can hopefully start with a sense of funding prospects and how the current network (editorial board and authors) sees the range of options. For options like 3 to 5, a transition stage might be useful, both to develop online activities and to explore/develop partnerships.

Depending on preferred approaches, it then becomes important to reach agreement on the project institution(s), and project and editorial people for the next phase; proposal development and consultation follow.

Planning Meeting in Penang

The discussion in Penang covered all aspects of DiRAP. What follows are some reflections, again from one (subjective) point of view. A few points have also been added to the text above where they correct or improve on earlier drafts.

The IDRC funding situation is uncertain, and probably doesn’t realistically include a Phase 3 that is like Phase 2. IDRC advice I thought included two prominent points. First, propose what the next-phase group is comfortable with and excited about, and second, put together a business plan. Further thoughts on the last would be:

- The proposal could be stand-alone or partnership. The main partnership possibilities may be GISW on one side, ESCAP on the other. DiRLAC, LIRNE-WDR and Possibly RIA could also work - with or without either GISW or ESCAP. An early priority could be to explore those which are seen as most appealing.
- The main elements of the business plan are proposed activities, and inputs – donor funding (all partners), free and low-cost ‘labor’ or input services, perhaps business and voluntary/philanthropic contributions, probably not sales.

- It is quite an open business model, so key parts are to line up as much co-production and low-cost input as possible, and seek funding for the parts which have to be paid in cash rather than kind. (It could be of interest to IDRC in this aspect also, of testing an open model).
- The preferences of the current Editorial Board would appear to lie between options 3 and 4. Partners, if any, would I think tend to push that toward 4.
- The preferences are also regional, voices in the region, all countries engaged if possible.
- Identifying, reaching, monitoring and understanding main target audiences is necessary in developing a business plan; a good start could be with the 2009-10 edition online (IDRC, then DiRAP) and print.
- Mapping out objectives/outcomes and how they will be reached helps in deciding on priorities – direct and indirect (stakeholders, media etc) policy influence, research, education – including capacities in each area.
- Focus, content, structure and style tend to follow. Data, synthesis, analysis/comparison, interpretation (and controversy) add a lot to information for most audiences. Transformative aspects of ICTs are of particular interest to many.
- Many forms of online activity were discussed - from country blogs to debates, thematic roundtables, issue abstracts and policy briefs, educational materials etc. These would need a core of active managers/editors. Outsourcing website services makes sense; better still, finding partners with them.
- Discussion of current themes of interest – from the PAN-ALL meetings – included access and rights to information, IPR, ICT and environmental sustainability, ICT-health, HIV-AIDS, innovation. All of these are prominent in IDRC programming, current and prospective. One suggestion for some interim research is that of mapping out the ICT-innovation terrain from ICT&D and innovations systems (and other) perspectives.

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Digital Review of Asia-Pacific: Centro Internacional de ...

The "Digital Review of Asia-Pacific" is a joint collaboration by Pan Asia Networking [PAN] of the International Development Research Centre [IDRC] of ...

www.ghri.gc.ca/es/ev-9728-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html - 23k - Cached - Similar pages -

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The Digital Review of Asia-Pacific project is a joint collaboration by Pan Asia Networking [PAN] of the International Development Research Centre [IDRC] of ...

www2.unescobkk.org/education/ict/v2_2/detail.asp?id=1295 - 14k - Cached - Similar pages -

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AiDA - knowledge, collaboration, information, partnerships

13 Feb 2009 ... AiDA > Sector List > Information and Communica... > Bilateral, unallocated [R... > DIGITAL REVIEW OF ASIA PACIFIC (DIRAP) - PHASE II ...

aida.developmentgateway.org/.../ActivityView.do~sourcePage=sectorCountry~sector=5410~arc_hive=0~iso3=QZA... - 25k - Cached - Similar pages -

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WSIS STOCKTAKING & PARTNERSHIPS : ACTIVITY DETAILS Project ID ...

Activity: Digital Review of Asia Pacific website of the activity. Activity description: Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2005/2006 edition introduced in ...

www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/plugin/documents.asp?project=1117204872&lang=en - 8k - Cached - Similar pages -

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Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007/2008 (Paperback) by ...

0 ratings, 0 reviews. The Digital Review of Asia Pacific provides an overview of how information and communication technology (ICT) is being diffused ...

www.goodreads.com/book/show/3000428.Digital_Review_of_Asia_Pacific_2007_2008 - 31k - Cached - Similar pages -

66

ICT4D - Information, Communication Technologies for Development

Visit the website of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific <<http://www.digital-review.org>> for a more comprehensive introduction to this wide-ranging ...

www.ict4dasean.org/index2.php?main=news/2004-02-27.php - 16k - Cached - Similar pages -

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Diverging information societies of the Asia Pacific

Digital Review of Asia Pacific, 10050 Penang, Malaysia. Received 28 January 2005; accepted 28 January 2005. Abstract. The Asia Pacific is home to the best ...

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Charles Mok 可圈可點: Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007-2008

- [Translate this page]

I co-wrote the section about Hong Kong in this Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007-2008, with Geoff Long and Dr John Fung. Click on the image below for ...
charlesmok.blogspot.com/2008/04/digital-review-of-asia-pacific-2007.html - 30k - Cached - Similar pages -

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[DOC] Chanuka Wattegama

File Format: Microsoft Word - View as HTML

Sriramesh, Krishnamurthy and Chanuka Wattegama [2007] 'The role of ICTs in Risk Communication in the Asia-Pacific' - Digital Review of Asia Pacific, ...

www.lirneasia.net/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/chanuka-wattegama-complete-cv.doc - Similar pages - by C POSITION

70

bytesforall_readers : Message: Re: [bytesforall_readers] 1st ...

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tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/bytesforall_readers/message/871 - 27k - Cached - Similar pages -

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Digital review of Asia Pacific [2003/2004]. AUTHOR: Abdullah, Zainol Abidin...[et al.].

PUBLISHER: Kuala Lumpur : Asia-Pacific Development Information ...

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Profile of Nalaka GUNAWARDENE

editor of Digital Review of Asia Pacific (www.digital-review.org) published by UNDP-APDIP, UNESCO Orbicom and Canada's IDRC. He was a researcher and writer ...

lightmillennium.org/biographies/nalaka_gunawardene.html - 55k - Cached - Similar pages -

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IDL-BNC @ IDRC: Technical report for the Digital Review of Asia ...

Project Title: Digital Review of Asia Pacific. Document Access: Currently this document is not available in electronic format. To enquire about document ...

<https://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/handle/123456789/31741> - 14k - Cached - Similar pages -

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76

::: Infocon - ICT Consulting Services :::

The completely updated edition of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific contains authoritative reports on how 31 economies are using ICT in business, ...

www.infocon.mn/eng/index.php?inf=publications - 35k - Cached - Similar pages -

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Index of /onno/raw-data/digital-review-of-asia-pacific/manuscript

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idkf.bogor.net/onno/raw-data/digital-review-of-asia-pacific/manuscript/ - 4k - Cached - Similar pages -

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List No. (Year-Month). 2008-04. Call No. HC 415 I55 D54 2008. Author(s). -. Title. Digital review of Asia Pacific 2007-2008. Place of Publication ...

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Observatorio

The first edition of the "Digital Review of Asia-pacific" will be launched in July 2002. June 28, 2002 - The first edition of the "Digital Review of ...

infolac.ucol.mx/observatorio/nwsletter2.html - 14k - Cached - Similar pages -

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ICT Development Agenda

Regional Roundup : Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2005/6 To Address Governance and Economic Issues, Asia Pacific / Oceania, 19 Apr 2004 ...

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www.fiam.org/en/pages/issues.html - 32k - Cached - Similar pages -

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Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007/2008. view · links. Recent Work. Recorded Talks. 'Anyone Can Edit': Vom Nutzer zum Produzter (German Version, 2008) ...

snurb.info/node/774/links - 19k - Cached - Similar pages -

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The "Digital Review of Asia-Pacific" is a bi-annual review providing facts, figures, data and analysis of the state-of-the-art of ICT and Internet diffusion ...

www2.unescobkk.org/education/ict/v2_2/detail.asp?id=1443 - 12k - Cached - Similar pages -

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[-empyre-] fresh perspectives from Aotearoa / Strategic Digital ...

... Music And Digital Art Practices In The Asia Pacific Region, a UNESCO Digi-Arts colloquium in December 2003; and the Digital Review of Asia Pacific, ...

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"Digital Review of Asia-Pacific" will be Irfan Khan Sun 30 Jun 2002 - 05 ... Series on Gender and ICTs Irfan Khan Tue 25 Jun 2002 - 04:25 pm

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Participant, Planning Committee of Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007-2008 Edition, International Development Research Center, April 2005, Kuala Lumpur, ...

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Digital Review of Asia Pacific · Bytes4All – Computing and Internet for the Majority World · World Summit on the Information Society ...

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ASEAN Foundation

Orbicom, PAN-IDRC, APDIP-UNDP and Southbound launched in September the Digital Review of Asia Pacific which provides a quick overview of how ICTs ...

www.aseanfoundation.org/index2.php?pageNum_news_page=14&totalRows_news_page=116&main=news.php - 39k - Cached - Similar pages -

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Orbicom - Le Réseau International des Chaires UNESCO en Communication

And that's the focus of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific (DirAP) 2009-2010."Today, the Internet is the primary instrument for communicating and sharing ...

www.orbicom.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=862&Itemid=202 - 18k -

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ARC Cultural Research Network > Activities> Internationalizing ...

11 Dec 2008 ... She has been the author or co-author of the Australia chapter for the UN-funded Digital Review of Asia-Pacific since 2003. ...

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CREATEC

Social, political and cultural aspects of ICT: E-governance, popular participation and international politics, in Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2005/2006, ...

createc.ea.ecu.edu.au/researchers/profile.php?researcher=lgreen0 - 34k - Cached - Similar pages

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[PPT] IDRC's ICT4D

File Format: Microsoft Powerpoint - View as HTML

Strategic Modalities. ICT RnD Small Grants Competition –Asia Pacific. The Digital Review of Asia Pacific. The Asia ICT4D Collaboratory - REST ...

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Media South Asia

Most recently, Nalaka co-wrote the Sri Lanka chapter in the Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2003-2004, a regional assessment undertaken on behalf of the UNDP ...

www.mediasouthasia.org/nala.asp - 394k - Cached - Similar pages -

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ICT for Development

Digital Review of Asia Pacific. This publication reviews how ICTs are being deployed across the Asia Pacific to support the socioeconomic development of ...

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Annex 3 DiRAP 2003-2006; Leila Green, Edith Cowan

The Digital Review of Asia-Pacific 2003-2006¹

Lelia Green, Edith Cowan University, Australia

Abstract

This is a subjective view of the experience of contributing to the Digital Review of Asia-Pacific. Participation in this process, from 2003-6, permitted a unique opportunity to share perspectives across a wide range of cultural, technological and economic settings. As the Australian author I found myself responding in unexpected ways to the information being offered by other national representatives. For example, the human rights implications of some restrictions by nation-states in the Asia-Pacific were keenly felt by all group members, but could not be mentioned in ways that explicitly criticised the authorities concerned. In many nations of the Asia-Pacific the issue is not only one of content-produced in local languages, but also one of having the appropriate fonts in which to produce local content. Finally, the same technology, such as wireless broadband, is being used for very different purposes in different countries. This article reflects critically upon the value of an intensive and personal exposure to a range of different countries and cultures united in a geopolitical global region but with such a wide divergence of political, social, economic, technological and religious identities.

Introduction

This article provides a background to the Digital Review of Asia Pacific, which started in 2003, and which is published every two years. The third volume, 2007/8 is in press. Detailed specifics of the Review are followed by discussion of my personal experience of writing for the volume, as the chapter author for 'Australia', and of the experience of learning through interaction with other chapter authors; with the editorial team, and with the Chief Editor, Chin Saik Yoon (the Publisher and Managing Director of Southbound). This is a necessarily personal reflection since my experiences differed greatly from many of my co-authors. The article progresses to discuss some indicative differences in the digital environments of countries in the Asia Pacific region as revealed by the Review and finishes with some conclusions.

The Digital Review of Asia-Pacific, <http://www.digital-review.org/>, (DiRAP n.d.) has a complex list of publication credits reflecting both the inclusiveness and the cost of the endeavour. Canada is – perhaps unsurprisingly, given its commitment to development scholarship – the locus of two key contributing organisations: the Pan Asia Networking Programme, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada; and the Orbicom Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communications, Montreal (ORBICOM), which provides the base for the overall Publisher of the work, Professor (and Vice-Rector, University of Quebec) Claude-Yves Charron. The third copyright holder in the works, and the UN-funded Asia-Pacific based partner, is the Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-APDIP). In addition to holding the copyright in the two volumes so far published these three

¹ Copyright © 2008 (Lelia Green). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial No Derivatives. Available at <http://obs.obercom.pt>. Lelia Green. Observatorio (OBS*) Journal, 4 (2008), 055-063 1646-5954/ERC123483/2008 055

organisations are co-publishers with a fourth organisation – Penang-based Southbound (Malaysia) – which provides the design, typesetting and printing, and the chief editor (for the 2005/6 edition) Mr Chin Saik Yoon (also Publisher and Managing Director of Southbound). The editorial board represents the individuals whose vision realised the DiRAP, who also represent the key funding organisations. Other grants and contributions are acknowledged on an DiRAP volume by volume basis.

The rationale behind DiRAP is available on the web as one of the projects of UNDP-APDIP: <http://www.apdip.net/projects/dig-rev> (APDIP 2005). Here we learn that the project's specific objectives are:

- To provide a one-stop reference source on the state-of-practice and future trends in ICTs for development and ICTs for industry for the Asia-Pacific region;
- To serve as a comparative, analytical tool for policy and decision-makers, technology practitioners and experts, researchers and educators in the region;
- To strengthen the research capacity of key Southern ICT partners by developing their skills in collecting, analysing, synthesizing, publishing and marketing content;
- To enable Northern and Southern researchers to cooperatively build a needed, shared data resource, and
- To complement the Digital Divide Index effort, being undertaken by Orbicom, as a monitoring tool for evaluating the e-environments of Asia-Pacific countries.
- To conceptualise and test a sustainable business model for selling online the Digital Review in an electronic format to developed country readers, while at the same time providing it free-of-cost to key policy-makers, researchers, practitioners and libraries in the developing countries of the region.
- To build and nurture a core group of Asian researchers and writers to systematically review, analyse, forecast and report on ICT issues in the Asia Pacific Region on a regular basis. (APDIP 2005)

My role in DiRAP is as the national author representing Australia (although for 2007/8 I share national author credit with Dr Axel Bruns, editor of M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture [M/C n.d.]), and as the first author of a thematic chapter for the 2005/6 edition: 'Social, political and cultural aspects of ICT: E-governance, popular participation and international politics'. The APDIP (2005) policy document summarised my role as one of "a panel of contributors comprising both members of the academe and industry, who are already conducting on-going periodic reviews of the countries of their coverage. They will be provided with a template and style sheet to guide their preparation of contributions to the publication" (APDIP 2005).

My experience of participating in DiRAP: the writing

The vision for the Digital Review was to allow a reader to compare digital uptake and adoption across the Asia Pacific. Accordingly, every author had a country-specific panel to complete which allowed ready comparison of relative digital engagement and capacity-building. For example, the Australia facts table addressed (Green 2003, p. 29): Population; Rural population as % of total population; Key economic sectors; Literacy in the national language(s); Literacy in English; Computer ownership per 100 inhabitants; Telephone lines per 100 inhabitants; Internet hosts per 10,000 inhabitants; Internet cafes/telecentres per 10,000 inhabitants; Internet users per 100 inhabitants; Cell phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants; Number of websites in the national

language(s); National bandwidth within the country; National bandwidth to and from the country; Ratio of incoming and outgoing Internet traffic volume. The 269 references I used in this chapter (ibid, pp. 42—6) indicate both that I several times had to stray away from areas in which I felt confident and charted my progress through rigorous citation, and also that I made extensive use of webbased information to source relevant data. I was consequently dismayed when the editors introduced a new rule for the following volume (to limit references to 20)!

The comparative ease of access I had to digital resources to research and write my chapter, and the unbelievable advantage of being allowed to write in my mother tongue, meant that my experiences of contributing to the publication of DiRAP 2003/4 (and DiRAP 2005/6), differed from that of most of my fellow authors. I soon became aware of the extraordinarily privileged situation I was in: additionally, there was a lot to write about. Australia is a very fortunate country in terms of digital investment and infrastructure. While it may lag behind, for example: Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Singapore, depending upon the indicator chosen, it was almost always possible to find something to say about each of the suggested headings and subheadings provided for the chapter structure. I'm delighted to say that Australia did not have the longest chapter in that first volume, however – there was more to say about Singapore.

The 2005/6 volume was able to respond to the feedback of readers and user-groups who had had access to 2003/4. In addition to the 29 individual nations represented (Iran and Maldives had joined the team of national authors), there were three subregional groupings (ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] and APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] joined the Pacific Islands). All chapters outlined the nation's, or the subgrouping's response to ICT opportunities. Further, there were four 'theme chapters', three of which had multiple authors largely drawn from the pool of national authors. These teams were selfselecting but managed to combine a wealth of differing perspectives. The thematic chapter that I worked on ('Social, political and cultural aspects of ICT: E-governance, popular participation and international politics'), for example, included an author each from Iran, Dr Masoud Shafiee; Malaysia, Associate Professor Zaharom Nain, and the Phillipines, Dr Emmanuel C. Lallana as well as myself.

A further innovation in the 2005/6 volume, and one that replaced (at that time) the individual country's ICT facts, was a diagrammatic representation of the country's relative access in 2003 to a range of ICTs and development indicators. This 2003 indicator was visually compared (by means of an indicative scale) with that of the same country in 1995, and with the global average of access for 2003. The work of compiling this visual representation of the global-wide digital state of play had been a major project for Orbicom in the years leading up to 2003 (Sciadas 2003). It was chastening to realise how much a country such as Australia differed from the norm, dwarfing the usual reference points which were so indicative for so many other countries in the DiRAP volume. (Although the 2007/8 volume has yet to be published, a table equivalent to the country facts has been re-established, so it may be that both sets of information have been found to be useful.)

A further innovation for the second volume was the introduction of up to two 'side-bars' per country chapter: one of these offered a success to be celebrated (and possibly adapted by other countries into other circumstances) and the other was an opportunity to offer a cautionary tale. In the case of Australia, the celebration was of the Western Australian Telecentre Network. Although my PhD had focused on the impacts of broadcast services to remote Western Australia,

and although I knew something of the value placed upon the services by Australians living in rural and regional communities, I had to travel to Kuala Lumpur (2003), and Jakarta (2005) to realise that Western Australian policy makers had provided a telecommunications-access model of international significance. Many of my co-authors wanted to know more about this network of centres, and it made for an easy choice of topic for the Australian ‘side-bar of success’. As for my cautionary tale, I didn’t have to look much further than Australian/US free trade agreement – which was being finalised as I wrote. While the ostensible aim was free trade, one effect was to align further the Australian copyright environment (50years) with that of the US, by increasing to 70 years copyright protections for US properties in Australia. The nett impact, far from freeing trade in information and culture, was to make it more restrictive. The Australian open source movement was also bitterly (and unsuccessfully) opposed to the changes which were rushed through the Australian parliament.

My experience of participating in DiRAP: the learning

The original commitment by the three publishers – the Pan Asia Networking Programme, IDRC; Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, UNDP, and Orbicom – was to fund two volumes of the publication in the expectation that the third and subsequent volumes would become self-financing as a result of sales of the books and subscriptions to the regularly-updated website. Although the authors are not business partners – and not privy to the financial success (or otherwise) of the enterprise – it is exciting that a third volume is in press and that the model appears sustainable. As mentioned, one aim of the project was to: “To build and nurture a core group of Asian researchers and writers to systematically review, analyse, forecast and report on ICT issues in the Asia Pacific Region on a regular basis” (APDIP 2005).

The project development finances allowed the nurturing of the core group of authors to occur in an exemplary way. Firstly, the authors represented no uniformity of background. Some were IT academics – usually from the systems management/technical areas (while I was from the humanities) – but this was not overwhelmingly the case. Many were policy experts and advisers to their respective governments. Some were IT entrepreneurs with international networks and connections, operating as one of few ‘digital entry points’ to their economies. A few were professionals committed to a development agenda, whose experience of wealthy economies coupled with their commitment to their adopted homes) enabled them to experience the digital divide in a way that highlighted the potential benefits of supporting community-based IT initiatives. A number of authors had written policy articles, and a few had a background in journalism, but for most of the chapter authors English was a second or subsequent language.

The author gatherings – Kuala Lumpur (2003, during Ramadan), and Jakarta (2005) – were characterised by a reviewing of the draft chapters and by discussion in small groups of the issues arising. For example, a ‘regional grouping’ within Asia Pacific places Australia and New Zealand together with Timor-Leste (East Timor), Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Pacific Islands. Alphabetical positioning unites Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Bhutan and China with Hong Kong. It was almost impossible for a grouping not to reveal a wealth of new information and perspectives. Typically the group began with a round table exchange of backgrounds and perspectives (we had generally come to be our country’s chapter-author by a variety of ways) and then got down to a nitty-gritty discussion: what were the biggest challenges confronting ‘ICT4D’ (the deployment of ICTs for development) in our area? Given that the challenges had been identified, were any other countries aware of strategies to address these challenges that had worked?

In addition to the ‘assigned’ groupings, which took up perhaps half of the round-table time, the authors arranged themselves on other occasions according to groupings of interest. These included such critical issues as ‘fonts’. Until that point I hadn’t realised the double-difficulty of promoting digital culture in a country with low levels of mother tongue literacy and no standardised fonts for developing websites in that language. Thus Bhutan (for example) in 2003 was working with Microsoft engineers to develop a standard Dzongkha font in Unicode. At that stage there were no websites in the national language. The 2005/6 Digital Review Bhutan chapter reports that the first Bhutanese website was launched on January 9, 2004. “The initiative is hampered by low technology and the lack of a standardised font in the national language. Visitors to the website will notice that the pages are made up of large image files imported into HTML tags. This is not the ideal way, but it seems to be the best available option for the moment”. (Pradhan 2005, p. 83). The site is at: <http://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt/index-dz-a.htm>.

In contrast to the vigorous discussion taking place on fonts, I was involved in an exchange about wireless broadband. In Australia, recent changes to legislation had caught up with the fact that domestic wireless broadband should not fall under legislation which required all broadcasters to hold a licence. Privileged Australian families were installing wireless broadband to allow multiple family members simultaneous access to the Internet (in whichever domestic location they preferred: often in front of the television) thus preventing the squabbling over whose turn it was on the Internet-connected computer. This use of wireless contrasted with an Indonesian example of a grass-roots solution to the high cost of Internet access “using off-the-shelf WiFi equipment that was adapted locally to build affordable neighbourhood broadband networks” (Pradhan et al 2005, p. 5). These access-innovators had gone on to explore “alternative regional networks in the country, using either a satellite backbone or the fibre/microwave backbone of cellular operators” (ibid, p. 5). Clearly, Australia’s debates had less to contribute to the ICT4D discussions than Indonesia’s.

As well as engaging in arranged (and in self-selected) groups, the country authors were also involved in wide-ranging seminar discussions and debates with the Editorial Board and the Publishers (and their representatives and policy makers). Sometimes this was at the residential/work/conference venue where we were meeting: sometimes it was as part of a field trip to explore local initiatives (such as the Cyberjaya, in Malaysia’s Multimedia Super Corridor [MSC]), and a locally-run and user-serviced cybercafé in downtown Jakarta. Importantly, the learning continued after the face-to-face round tables since every author had to review and offer feedback on at least two other revised chapters (and had to respond to feedback offered) as well as working with ‘external’ reviewers who represented the perspectives of key stake-holders (such as policy-makers and IT developers).

The elephant in the room in any discussion of Internet access and information exchange in the Asia Pacific was the vastly different political perspectives of the countries concerned when it came to concepts such as those labelled in the West as ‘free speech’ and ‘holding governments to account’. All country authors were required to undertake that conversations and opinions shared openly in the sessions remain private, and were not to be recorded or repeated. While many of the differences in perspective can be traced back to a philosophical belief in whether the rights of the individual should take precedence over the rights of the group (or not) it soon became clear that a (Western country-based) web-search would be an easier and fairer method for gaining specific information about ICTs, human rights and civil liberties. Relevant sites include Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org>),

International PEN Writers in Prison (<http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/index.php?pid=4>) and the International Federation of Journalists (<http://www.ifj.org/default.asp?Language=EN>).

Indicative differences in ICT environments in the Asia Pacific

The Digital Review is replete with details of the ICT environment for the Asia Pacific nations involved. Those who wish to access specific details about particular nations are encouraged to pre-order the 2007/8 volume now (DiRAP n.d.), and to obtain a hard copy of the 2005/6 volume (which is bundled with a searchable CDROM of the 2003/4 volume). Additionally, or alternatively, a number of web resources are available on the Digital Review site: <http://www.digital-review.org/>. Whereas the individual country chapters necessarily concentrate on the country of interest and thus do not engage in comparative analysis, there are contextualized comparisons within the themed chapter section of the 2005/6 volume. The raw material for these overarching chapters is generally sourced from previously-published information, and thus broadly reflective of the situation prior to 2005. The chapters were multiply-authored (apart from the one on Internet governance), predominantly by country-chapter writers who could bring their own perspectives to bear. The four themes addressed were:

- Building information societies: Bridging the digital divide in Asia Pacific
- Internet governance: Urgent issues for Asia Pacific
- Social, political and cultural aspects of ICT: E-governance, popular participation and international politics
- Appropriate ICT for Asia Pacific: Opting for open source, localization, internationalization and free access.

The flavour of one theme chapter can be gauged by this excerpt from ‘Social, political and cultural aspects of ICT’ (Green et al 2005, p. 32), which looks at the nature of information poverty and argues that it is a two-edged sword: Not only is there a lack of access for the poor as consumers of information and communication products, but there is a corresponding lack of access for the poor as producers of such products – and no realistic editorial control over the content produced by information-powerful others. The information rich countries control the representations of the information poor, and select images congruent with pre-existing perceptions and prejudices.

A similar dynamic can be seen to operate when considering the situation of the relatively information-poor population groups and societies in any country: they control neither the agenda nor the content of public debates. In Laos, for example, government agencies in the provinces have had to use floppy disks to send information collected in the regions to the capital for processing, while telephone density in Myanmar has been estimated at less than 1 percent. [Unchanged in 2005/6] This digital divide, both inside the country and between poor and rich countries, has obvious implications for the future development of ICT, particularly if a government does not commit itself to providing universal communication access (as a right, regardless of commercial viability). This situation contrasts almost obscenely with Australia, where so much emphasis is put on the web delivery of government services that those without access queue for long periods, or make long telephone calls, to gain equivalent information.

The information rich – at the level of the household, and of the nation – are wealthy according to a range of indicators, and are likely to be perceived as rich as well as information rich. It may not

be technology access that makes them rich; instead, their technology access may be only one of a number of traits, a privilege that reveals wealth rather than confers it. Arguably, most of the information rich in consumer societies are ignorant of the lives and aspirations of people they class as information poor, and the information poor have few opportunities to communicate back to them as equals in a discussion about rights and responsibilities. In some nations, such as Timor- Leste, the comparative lack of Internet-connected computers is only one of numerous challenges facing the country.

Conclusion

Sadly for those of us involved in contributing chapters to the Digital Review, it looks as though the original structural model (involving a week in the company of other authors) may not be sustainable in the longterm. The 2007/8 volume has not been written with the benefit of this inter-author interaction. While there is some talk of a launch of the new volume to which authors will be invited; dates, details and costings are sketchy. Notwithstanding changes in the processes of producing the volume, the information in it remains as detailed, as intriguing and as valuable as ever. It is time that the initiative was duplicated in other regions of the world – Europe, for example – and that the key founding objective of enabling “Northern and Southern researchers to cooperatively build a needed, shared data resource” took international form (APDIP 2005). It would be great to arrive at a point where various Digital Reviews representing regions from around the world collaborated to create a global picture of how nations and economies are responding to the online environment.

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